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Nota Bene.

IT would greatly lessen the burden of the office work of the Union if subscribers for the *Journal* would kindly send their subscription as soon as possible to *Rev. H. C. Morton, B.A., 24, Carlisle Terrace, The Hoe, Plymouth.*

We would remind our friends that the price fixed as the minimum for the *Journal* and its postage does not by any means cover its cost, the deficit being supplied out of our General Fund as a part of our propaganda work. The Committee will be very grateful if our friends will send contributions to our Fund as they may be able. We are convinced there is no greater work to be done for God at the present time than that to which the Wesley Bible Union has set its hand, the work of seeking to protect Wesleyan Methodism from the infection of the Modernist apostasy, and, generally, that of defending Protestant evangelical truth from the ravages of the "grievous wolves" of rationalistic heresy.

The German Invasion of Britain.

We are congratulating ourselves that the invasion of Britain by the Germans has not come off, and well we may. What a reason it is for thanksgiving to Almighty God that it is now centuries since a foreign army invaded this happy land of ours ! How much we owe to the geographical position of our country which Dr. Henry Burton has so well described in that great hymn of his, number 975 in our hymn-book :—

Thou Who didst lead Thy people forth and make the captive free,
Hast drawn around our native land the curtain of the sea
To make another holy place where golden lamps should shine,
And human hearts keep loving watch around the ark Divine.

But, although we have been spared the unutterable calamity of a military invasion of Germans, and though we ought as a nation to put forth our uttermost effort to avert such an event which would be an unspeakable disaster not only for us but for all mankind, yet alas ! a terribly real German invasion of Britain has occurred, an invasion which is in reality more mischievous than the invasion of a German army would be. That invasion is the desolating incoming into the religious thought and life of this country of what is known as German theology.

Before entering upon this subject we wish to utter a disclaimer of any sympathy with that insane tendency which has found expression in this country to taboo everything German. If we imbibe the spirit of that devilish German "Hymn of Hate," Germany will have conquered us more effectively than if our country had been vanquished by her armies. The invasion of which we speak is the spread in our midst of the pestilence of the rationalistic theology based upon what is commonly understood when men speak of "German theology." There is a German theology to which we owe an unspeakable debt of gratitude. Who can measure what the whole world owes to Martin Luther, although alas ! in his famous speech about "the epistle of straw" and other unguarded utterances of his about parts of Holy Scripture, he did implant in German thought the microbes of that apostasy which has found its ripe fruit in the abominations of Nietzsche ? Still the whole Protestant world, and indeed all mankind can never estimate the incalculable debt of gratitude which it owes to Luther. It would be suicide for the theology of England

were we to turn away from the treasures of glorious theological literature which have come to us from Germany, such, for instance, as the works of Krummacher, that incomparable book Stier's "*Words of the Lord Jesus*"; those three priceless books of Luthardt: *The Fundamental, Saving, and Moral Truths of Christianity*; and that marvellous compendium of Biblical learning Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*. Although the mischief that has been done by the German destructive critics in their works upon the text of Holy Scripture is immeasurable, yet even here we are deeply indebted to them for the painstaking erudition which has placed at our disposal an immense body of material which is available for those who are engaged in devout and reverent critical investigation of the Book of God. It would be folly indeed to refuse to avail ourselves of the results of research, however mistaken the investigators who have brought the facts to light may have been in their interpretation of those facts. Indeed, in the Providence of God it has come to pass that Christian theology has very largely found its highway of progress by means of controversy with error. All through the centuries God has shewn us how to spoil the Egyptians, and every great heresy that has afflicted the Church has ultimately led the Church to the clearer apprehension of truths which had previously been obscured, or, in some cases, had not previously been discerned.

With this qualification, the prevalence of what is generally understood as German theology, that is the theology of the Higher Criticism so misnamed, is a German invasion more deadly in its effects than an invasion of German troops would have been. German "Kultur" has wrought and is working in our midst deadlier mischiefs by far than those which would be wrought by the barbarian outrages of German armies. The slaughter of religious faith and of Christian ideals is a far more terrible calamity for a nation than the slaughter of multitudes of people. A nation depraved by German philosophy and thrown back into Pagan disregard of the laws of God and righteousness is more really conquered by Germany than a nation subjugated by German force would be, if that nation, in spite of its external subjection to German rule, still maintained its faith in God and the Bible.

No one can gainsay the terrible fact that in this country of ours our present theology is frightfully tainted with the

system of thought which is conveniently denominated by the term "*Modernism*," a system of thought which discards faith in miracles, which repudiates the authority of the Bible, which openly antagonises the plain teachings of Christ and His Apostles, and which introduces the spirit of anarchy into all thought and life, making every man the sole authority for himself in the determination of what is true and what is false. The prevalence of these doctrines which are completely subversive of the foundations of Christian truth is very largely due to a peculiar idolatry of German literature that has been working untold mischief in our British Universities and schools during the last hundred years. Thomas Carlyle did very much to introduce this pestilence into our midst, and, though happily his writings have lost much of their former fascination for the English people, yet the pernicious influence of his German poison-gas is still working its deadly effects in British thought.

While we are greatly indebted to our heroic Army and Navy for the great service which they have rendered and are rendering to mankind in contending against the domination of German militarism in the political arena, it is of immeasurably greater importance that British patriots should arouse themselves to drive German theological errors out of our churches, our theological colleges, and our Universities. If the world is to be brought into that League of Nations which President Wilson has set before us as the essential basis of the Reconstruction which must follow the War, it can only be brought to it by Bible religion. The story which says that Queen Victoria declared that "the Bible is the secret of England's greatness" expresses a great truth, whether the particular story about Queen Victoria is mythical or not. The Bible is the secret of England's greatness. If England abandons the Bible, she will fall into the same abyss of degeneration into which Germany has fallen.

The Wesley Bible Union exists to seek to rescue Wesleyan Methodism from the dominance of this anti-christian apostasy which has wrought such havoc in Germany, and the influences of which are terribly manifest in our own midst in the decay of spiritual religion, in the decrease in attendance on public worship, in the decline of our Church membership and our Sunday Schools, in the lack of enthusiastic aggressiveness in our Temperance societies and in

moral reform generally, in Sabbath-breaking, and in the prevalence of gambling and of sexual immorality. Who will come to the help of the Lord against the mighty ?

Notes.

The Last Person we See is Our Self.

The *British Weekly* has a column each week by the Rev. David Smith, of Londonderry, who, in reply to various correspondents, at times has made valuable contributions to the spiritual life, and given wise explanations of passages of Scripture that are somewhat obscure. In the issue for December 13th, he writes on the question of the resurrection of the saints at Christ's Second Coming (1 Thess. iv. 16-17) and on the "first Resurrection" of Rev. xx. 5. He tells his correspondent that at Thessalonica Paul preached the imminence of the Second Advent, but finding that it "produced effects which he had never anticipated" he wrote again. Mr. Smith says: "The remedy lay in retracting the affirmation of an immediate return, but this error was rooted in his mind, and so he introduced an idea of Jewish theology: that the last judgment would be heralded by a supreme apostasy, the final struggle between God and the forces of evil. Thus, the Second Advent was imminent but not immediate. It was a desperate theory betraying the Apostle's bewilderment." There is no doubt as to the meaning of these words. They mean that we cannot trust the inspired Apostle as a safe guide, and his own statement that he received his Gospel (of which the Second Advent teaching was a part) "by revelation," must therefore be a false statement.

To what shifts are men reduced when they try to set aside such Scriptures as are not in accord with their own opinions! If Paul was "bewildered" in this, what becomes of the triumphant certainties so often found in his Epistles? How can we be sure that he was ever certain or right at all? And if so, of what value are his writings above those of other teachers? The fact is Dr. David Smith has given many other illustrations, besides this, of the terrible reality of that growing apostasy which he so very significantly refers to with disparagement—"an idea of Jewish Theology," a desperate theory betraying the Apostle's bewilderment.

The More Sure Word of Prophecy.

More sure than what? There is a difference of opinion as to what Peter meant by this word "more sure" in 2 Pet. i 19. Much, however, is to be said in favour of the interpretation which believes that he meant that the word of prophecy is a stronger bulwark of the faith than the audible voice which they heard in the Holy Mount. Whatever Peter meant in the passage, it is quite certain that for the establishment of the faith along through the centuries the word of prophecy is in many respects a stronger certificate that the Bible-message is not a cunningly devised fable than even the voice on the Mount of Transfiguration. Only five human beings were permitted to hear the voice on the Holy Mount, viz., Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John. But every man who hears the prophetic voice as it speaks from the pages of the written word hears the voice of God speaking now. He not only possesses the record of what the five heard, but he hears for himself now, at this present moment, and what he hears is an obvious miracle standing there before him on the page. Take, for example, Is. 53 and Ps. 22

and read them with the Crucifixion before the eyes, and the reader sees for himself an incontrovertible miracle. The chapters which furnished such a portraiture of the death of Christ could not have proceeded from the prophet's own "private interpretation," as Peter says; they were not the product of the prophet's own promptings, but he spake as he was "swept out" of himself by the Holy Ghost (Gk. *pheromenoi, moved*, lit. *borne away*). The two passages in Isaiah and the Psalms are only samples of many others, such, for instance, as the unmistakable prediction of the Papacy and its errors in such passages as 1 Tim 4¹⁻⁵, 2 Thess. 2^{3, 4}. Any man who will compare the prophetic word with the facts of history must admit that none but God can be speaking here, unless he is blinded by the ophthalmia of prejudice against the supernatural. While on this theme we cannot refrain from referring our readers to the marvellous demonstration of the precise accuracy of Daniel's chronological predictions contained in that priceless book Anstey's "*Romance of Bible Chronology*." The Bible is a Holy Mount accessible to every man where the voice of God is *always* audible.

The Prophetic Word and the Jews.

The Liberation of Jerusalem from the clutches of the False Prophet is a demonstration of the supernatural character of Bible prophecy so wonderful that it literally dazzles our eyes with its splendour.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11th, 1917,

will henceforth stand for ever as one of the *crisis-dates* of the history of the universe. After more than a millennium of Mohammedan profanation it is a joy of joys and a miracle of miracles that, according to the declarations of prophecy, there is this great stride towards the restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem. All Bible readers should now be making themselves familiar with the many prophecies bearing on this question, of which the following are a sample:—Amos 9^{14, 15}; Ezek. 37¹⁵⁻²⁸, 28²⁴⁻²⁶; Is. 60²¹; Ezek. 34^{22, 24}; Jer. 30⁹; Ps. 89³; Is. 55³; Ezek. II^{17, 18}, 20³³⁻⁴³, 37¹², 36²³, 39²⁵⁻²⁹, 38⁸; Rom. II^{15, 25, 26}; Rev. II²; Jer. 24^{6, 318}; Zech. 8⁷⁻⁸; Luke 21²⁴. We say to all our readers what the voice said to Augustine: "*Tolle, lege.*" "*Take up the book and read.*" Get out of the darkness into the sunlight of God's prophetic word.

Britain's Message of Cheer from the Prophetic Word.

If Britons did but understand it, this "Entry into Jerusalem" ought to enhearten them as nothing has done since the war began; for surely it indicates that God is using our nation as His instrument for the Restoration of Israel. It demonstrates that we are in the tide of God's onward movement. We are caught up into the current of His plan, and, in spite of our many national sins, God in His mercy is condescending to employ us in leading on to the final triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom.

The Gift of Jerusalem from God to Britain a Summons to Consecration.

How holy should they be who bear the vessels of Jehovah (Is. 52¹¹)! If God has now put into the hands of Britain the sacred task of the Restoration of the Chosen People, how careful should this nation be to arouse herself for the fulfilment of this task by putting on the white-linen robes of the saints! God is now proffering to us as a nation a great opportunity. **SHALL WE WE BE FOUND WORTHY, OR SHALL WE MAKE THE GREAT REFUSAL?**

Will the Drunkards of Britain Destroy our Opportunity?

In presence of God's great invitation to Britain to march on to victory in this war for the accomplishment of His purposes concerning Jerusalem,

is Great Britain going to allow her drunkards to blight her prospects? The Jewish prophets have shewn us in lurid colours the part that drunkenness played in the ruin of ancient Israel (see Is. 28; Hab. 2). The menace of Drink is now threatening to destroy the British Empire. All our readers should purchase Arthur Mee's new book, "*The Parasite*" (published by Messrs. Morgan and Scott, 12 Paternoster Buildings, London, E.C., Price 6d.). This terrible indictment makes one wonder how a nation so guilty and so utterly irrational in its behaviour towards the *Drink Fiend* can hope for victory. We say "a nation" for the guilt in this matter is the guilt of the whole nation. It is unjust to heap it all upon the Government. The Premier has hinted that the Government do not act because of Labour. Some are saying this is a slander. If it is, why does not Labour indignantly repudiate it? The Labour Party are not the only persons whose silence is largely responsible for the Government's inaction. If the teetotalers of England had been more in earnest during this Wartime, the position of the Liquor Traffic would not be what it now is. The Temperance people of England were cajoled into yielding to the plea that they had better not be too prominent in the agitation for the restriction of the traffic, lest the movement should suffer harm from the prejudice against teetotal fanaticism. The Temperance people have greatly blundered in not seizing the great opportunity which the Russian and Canadian Prohibition had created for a national Temperance crusade. Those Temperance people who have given their support to State Purchase have also much to answer for by dividing the Temperance forces by the advocacy of a system which would confer new dignity upon the Liquor Shop by transforming it into a State Institution.

But is the Government Free from Blame?

The sad and damning answer to this question is to be found in "*The Fiddlers*," "*Defeat or Victory*," and "*The Parasite*." Stuart Holden and Arthur Mee have deserved the gratitude of the nation for the noble effort they have made to arouse its sleeping conscience. Alas! alas! the symptoms are that to a large extent their prophetic appeal seems to be falling upon deaf ears. In the early days of the War it looked as if Lloyd George were going to lead the nation to victory over the Drink Foe. What has become of his great speeches concerning drastic measures to be taken with the drink? Are they to be written down in history as nothing but fussy bluff, empty rhodomontade? Where is Lloyd George now? What is he doing? What is Lord Rhondda about? Prosecuting people for throwing crusts into dust-bins and making legal provision for the destruction of food-stuffs by thousands of tons at a stroke by the brewers. What is the Government about? Prosecuting a few poor pacifists under a fuming, raging plea for the urgent necessity for increased man-power in the Army, and providing for the destruction of soldiers by the thousands in its wet canteens, and by its rum-rations, blighting the soldiery of Prohibition Canada by thrusting them into contact with its canteens with their terrific product of inefficiency, vice, crime, debauchery, and venereal disease. How can Lloyd George justify it to his conscience to continue to uphold a system like this?

A Few Jottings from "The Parasite."

Every case of 1000 shells turned out by a great firm was 100 short through Drink.

An explosive firm declared that Drink was making it impossible to supply the War Office with its orders for T.N.T.

The lost labour through Drink in controlled works alone was equal to the work of 150,000 men.

The National Service Department announced that 500 men could not be released for fighting because they could not get women to take their places. But at least 100,000 were serving out Drink in public-houses.

6000 hours were lost through Drink in one week in one port alone.

100 men were at one time in prison in one port alone through failing to joining their ships.

The Admiral at Dover said Drink undermined the efficiency of patrol vessels, assisted the enemy, and imperilled many lives.

100 Admirals and Generals have signed a document declaring that Drink hampers the Navy and hinders the Army: it delays transports, places them at the mercy of submarines, slows down repairs, and congests the docks.

The National Service Scheme placed 5000 people on the land. But 40,000 labourers are used all the time for growing barley for beer.

Taking beer alone, the annual destruction of grain is:—

Grain	...	...	...	600,000 Tons of Barley
Equals	...	...	...	360,000 Tons of Flour
Making	...	...	...	270,000,000 Bread Rations
That is, weekly rations.				

The beer drinkers of the United Kingdom are drinking up the food provision of the people at the rate of 270,000,000 sugar-rations, and 270,000,000 bread-rations in a year—six weeks' sugar and six weeks' bread for the whole nation.

The Government appointed an Alcohol Commission. On this Commission there was not one chemist, not one industrial expert, but **EIGHT MEMBERS OUT OF THE TWELVE WERE DRINK-TRADE REPRESENTATIVES!!!**

Where are the Churches?

The Churches are paralysed by the twin-evils of the prevalent Modernist Apostasy and Worldliness. The Churches' message is powerless because a large number of its most prominent men are teaching the people to doubt the Bible and are producing on the minds of men the impression that God has left mankind to grope its way without a definite revelation as best it can to the discovery of religious truth under the guidance of a so-called Higher Criticism whose schools are an arena of interminable debate and disagreement. Who can give an intelligible answer to this question:—**WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD ON EARTH AT THE PRESENT TIME?**

The Message of Wesleyan Methodism on the Drink War Problem.

John Wesley was the pioneer of the Modern Temperance Reform. In our Standards the famous philippic against the liquor traffic in the great sermon on "*The Use of Money*," stands as one of the most powerful assaults on the citadel of Drinkdom in existence. But the chief Temperance official of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, is an advocate of State Purchase of the Liquor Traffic, thus supporting a system that would make the State a purveyor of death and damnation to her children. The last Conference passed unanimously the following excellent resolution concerning the Liquor Traffic:—

"The Conference declares that the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor for beverages is **DEFINITELY OPPOSED TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE STATE AND TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**; and recommends our people everywhere to work and pray for the

TOTAL AND PERMANENT PROHIBITION of the common manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks.

And yet the Connexional Temperance Secretary stands for the support of a measure which would convert the Drink Trade into a State Establishment !!!

The Strength of Britain Movement.

We are glad to see that the Strength of Britain organization is bestirring itself for a new campaign, a cartoon campaign. Cartoon No. I represents Uncle Sam with sacks of grain piled up behind him addressing John Bull and saying :

What's the use of me saving barley from my distilleries if you hand it over to your brewers?

Mr. Hoover, America's Food Administrator, said on June 11th, 1917 :

I do not think that the grain, when imported into the United Kingdom, should be used for alcoholic liquors. It is not my intention to tell the people of Great Britain what they ought to do, but sacrifice on one side deserves some sacrifice on the other.

The United States and Canada are setting us a good example in the matter of Prohibition. In Canada, 8 provinces out of 9, in the United States, 27 out of the 48 States have adopted Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic. The Senate adopted a Resolution for Constitutional Prohibition throughout the United States by a majority of two to one in July last, and on December 17th, the House of Representatives adopted an identical Resolution by a vote of 282 to 128. As soon as thirty-six States have ratified this vote Prohibition will be a part of the Constitution of the United States.

We are informed by information direct from the United States that there is a strong feeling in that country concerning the exportation of grain to England while this country is wasting so much grain in the manufacture of liquors that are a prolific source of inefficiency, crime, vice, disease, insanity, and death. A strong party exists there for pressing the United States Government to prohibit the sending of grain to the United Kingdom as long as our Government sanctions the destruction of foodstuffs in the manufacture of death-drinks. If we do not take care, the United States, Canada, and Australia, will be alienated from us by our liquor policy.

The address of the Strength of Britain Movement is *175 Piccadilly, London, W.1.* The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. H. Stephens Richardson, will thankfully receive donations for the Cartoon Campaign.

The Great Certainty. The Great Uncertainty.

The liberation of Jerusalem is an index finger pointing us to the fact that tokens are appearing that God is inviting us to make haste and usher in the millennium. The great certainty is that the millennium will come. But the uncertainty is when. Its coming may be delayed by the unbelief and unfaithfulness of the Church. Man possesses this awful power: he can

LIMIT THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL (Ps. 78⁴¹).

By calling Britain to the deliverance of Jerusalem God has offered her to be His agent in bringing in the latter-day glory. The question is: Will Britain seize the opportunity of being the Champion of the Kingdom of God, or will she stand before the ages in the records of the Twentieth Century as a poor abject victim led in chains of evil habit and loathsome disease, a spectacle to men and fiends, the captive and slave of the triumphant Drink Demon?

Preaching and Experience.

REV. WILLIAM J. PEARCE.

The preacher, at any rate the Methodist preacher, is supposed to preach the Gospel of Christ from the Word of God ; if he preach any other, or a different gospel “ which is not another,” he may be pleasing some, perhaps many, but he is not a servant of Christ, he is the servant of men. But to do this he must have life in the Gospel, and life from the Gospel ; in other words, he must live the Gospel he has received, and must practise the Gospel he preaches (Gal 1⁶⁻¹³).

The Gospel is the gift of glad tidings of peace and reconciliation with God through the Incarnate Son : its reception by the believer is the leaven which leavens the whole life : it is the germ of the incorruptible seed, the gift of God which develops in experience and practice into eternal life : he is thus “ born from above,” born of God ; he is a “ new creation ” ; “ the old things have passed away, behold they have become new.” Henceforth he is bound to no man but to Jesus Christ only. He thus begins, and he will thus continue, and will complete his work as a witness to the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation, and his capacity to preach that Gospel, his success in preaching that Gospel, is made to depend upon his obedience to its nature, purpose, precept, and promise. If he be obedient he shall be a partaker of the fruits of the Gospel indeed ; but if he obey not the Gospel of Christ he shall have much heart-burning and heavy judgment of conscience.

The earliest preacher of the Gospel that we read of—next to our Lord Himself—was the Apostle Peter, and the knowledge of how best to use the talents, he became conscious of possessing, he gathered from two sources : his conversion (epistrophe)—Luke 22³² A.V.—and his receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit : thus was he thoroughly furnished to confirm and to strengthen his brethren. And everyone familiar with the writings of the Apostles in the Book of the Acts and the Epistles will agree that the teaching and preaching of the Apostles (such fragments of sermons, prayers, and letters as we have) are largely the expressions of experience : and by their experience of the saving truths

of the Gospel they sought to confirm and establish those Churches of Christ which had grown up among the heathen. It was the fulfilment of the promise, "If any man willeth to do His will he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God" (John 7¹⁷). The doctrines they enunciated were the outgrowth of their experience, added to, and aided by, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

And whilst the verifications of the saving grace, and gracious purposes of the power and possibilities, of the Gospel of Christ are so largely the outgrowth of an experience, given and gained in repentance and forgiveness, in the heart of the steadfast, unmovable, devoted servant of God, they are ever being confirmed by the anointing graces and operating forces of the indwelling Spirit of God. When the Divine Spirit produces conviction of sin in the heart resulting in contrition for sin, He witnesses to the submissive penitent that God "is merciful to his iniquities and his sins will He remember no more" (Heb. 8¹²). Then will come the love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and through it the consciousness that "we love Him because He first loved us."

Then, only then, we feel an interest in His blood,
And cry with joy unspeakable, "Thou art my Lord my God."

And the God Whose unbounded love is thus shed abroad in the heart provides an outlet for the superabounding joy in a true and loyal witnessing for Christ through an experience of that love.

What we have felt and seen,
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.

The experience thus called into the life confirms, in all those whose "robes are washed white in the blood of the Lamb," the saving truths of the Gospel of Christ: and the Holy Spirit witnesses to the human spirit of the truth and reliability of the Word of God: and the experience and the preaching is the exultant confirmation of the Spirit's testimony within.

The Gospel of Christ is a theme which exceeds in largeness anything and everything that the mind of man has ever conceived or ever will conceive. Its breadth, length, depth, and height—expressive of the love of Christ—belong to the fulness of God, and surpass all mere human knowledge, though not beyond human experience, in increasing measure,

when strengthened with power through the Spirit in the inward man (Eph. iii.). Here is a treasury inexhaustible for the Christian preacher, and a treasury being ever replenished the more he gives out.

In recent years at least we have seen no greater preacher than Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who held for so many years, in the largest places of worship in the country, the largest congregation of hearers, and preached more sermons week-night and Sunday than his publishers—though publishing at least one a week during his prolonged and successful ministry and since—have yet been able to publish. The testimony of his ripe and rich experience rings out in all his sermons and Biblical comments, while he never hesitates to assure his hearers or readers that he would never have been able to preach or even to understand the Word of God if he had not passed through the experience of repentance, conversion, and salvation therein depicted; nor would he have ever been the privileged comforter to the sorrowful and afflicted, but that he had passed through so much sorrow and affliction himself. The same might be said of all the great preachers before his time and since, and particularly perhaps of Methodist preachers. And the explanation is that it is the experience of the preacher that must give the knowledge so necessary for the effectual ministry of his calling. For just as we speak of one as an “experienced mechanic”—when we know he has not spent his time in “dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,” nor in airy speculations about new possibilities of untried machinery, but in working with practical sagacity and constructive skill that of which he knows by experience the possibility, so the experienced Christian preacher is not a man who will speculate upon the possibilities of new and untried theories, but who, in fresh and thoughtful delight in the service of Christ, understands Him because he has experienced Him, and experiences Him because he understands Him.

Experience is a taste—“O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34⁸)—and just as mere words cannot make men understand what the sweetness of honey is, which only he who tasted is capable of telling; so, good and useful and necessary as books are, they can only tell us what the wonders of Divine grace, mercy, and peace are. We can understand them only by experience. Information is not experience, and

is but a poor substitute for it. "All is but lip wisdom that lacks experience" (Sidney).

Has the Christian Church as a whole lost or relegated to the background the doctrine of conversion? Has it made such concessions to what is regarded as social respectability, and what is called modern scholarship or up-to-date religious opinions or leanings, as to leave the preaching of conversion to the Salvation Army or other kindred Missions? If so, then to save its self-respect, perhaps to save its existence (in its present form) it must recover the word and fact of conversion. And by conversion we do not mean the spiritual recovery of the drunkard and the harlot merely—such as are happily caught in the Gospel net by those who go down to the moral waste places of our towns and cities—but also we must mean the spiritual recovery of respectable folk living in respectable neighbourhoods, who outwardly conform to the example of their forefathers, or to the customs of certain sections of society in which they move, or desire to move—who attend our well-built and well-appointed places of worship, and contribute to our offertories. This will mean conversion not only from vice, but from the love of money, the love of pleasure, the love of fame, pride of place or birth, and the self-esteem and self-merit which arises out of such pride. A life that has been renewed, re-constructed, re-born in such a conversion will have a leaven of virtue about it that, by its very impact in word and conduct, will produce conversion in others. Such effects were in a predominant degree the effects of the lives and labours of the Wesleys and Whitefield, and the early Methodist preachers they called into the work of evangelizing the country; and we rightly adhere to the customs of the Wesleys of requiring every Methodist preacher, whether in the local or itinerant ministry, ere he takes his place on the circuit plan, or the Minutes of Conference to give an account of his conversion. And why? Because spiritual life starts in conversion, and grows and becomes fruitful in a cultured experience; and we may fain hope that through a converted ministry the Church will be more and more familiar with the idea and experience of conversion.

Preaching with this experience and from this experience, the preacher will be drawn by "the lure of light" into the realization of "the truth as it is in Jesus," which embraces all those saving truths which have been preached with such

success since the Day of Pentecost. There can be no limitations of experience to the human spirit in contact with the Spirit of God : such an experience will "increase with the increase of God"—a continuous development "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," filling the heart with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." The Church, as a missionary institution, must get back this leaven of godliness if it would leaven the mass of humanity around. To be effective upon this mass is the outstanding problem of the Church to-day. It is not a question of re-statement of doctrine in light of modern research ; or the organizing of ecclesiastical force and funds ; but a return to the experience and the teaching, as well as the preaching, of those doctrines of the New Testament which from Christian Pentecost became the pillar and ground of faith "built upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." If we cannot get back this experience save by the return to that weekly means of grace and interchange of Christian testimony which the Methodist Church has called the "class meeting," surely every one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Methodist Church, and desires the extension of the kingdom of God amongst men, will join in this or some (if such can be found) equally effective form of cultivating the spiritual life, and making it fruitful to the healing of the nations.

Let the Christian preacher remember that his hearer needs, if he does not yearn for, the knowledge drawn, not not from speculative scholarship and critical genius, but from experience ; and let the hearer remember the path of obedience to the truth as it is in Jesus is the only path for the righteous, and in that path the faithful witness to that truth shall outgrow all doubts and uncertainties, and shall ride upon, and over the clouds ; and triumphing over the imperfections of human knowledge, his obedient following of the Spirit of God shall give to him an illumination in which faith shall pass into persuasion, persuasion into assurance, and all come to be perfected in a beatific vision of God and His purposes,—the fruition of those joys of Divine grace, by which God prepares His people for "the perfect day," even the fullest joys of His glory.

At the same time, let us remember how important it is that we should guard ourselves against the prevalent Modernist

heresy which bases the doctrine of the Church, not upon an objective revelation, but upon experience. This heresy, which at present is working sad havoc amongst the Churches, makes the individual experience the only determinant of the true and false. It is, indeed, the error that substitutes what the mystics call "the inward light" for the revelation of God. The theology which says that personal experience *alone* determines the Christian creed is a theology that makes each man God unto himself, and takes away from the Church every vestige of the Gospel the acceptance of which she can demand from every man. The message of a preacher whose basis of authority is *only* subjective personal experience is reduced to this: "I bring you what my subjectivity pronounces to be true to me, and leave you to accept just as much or as little of what I preach according as it seems to authenticate itself to your approval." Those who hold this view are accustomed to pride themselves on being "broad," whereas they are extremely narrow, circumscribing the infinite truth of God within the puny limits of individual experience. These people, so far from giving greater breadth of view, really seek to contract the ocean of God's infinite truth within the little puddle of a human heart. While setting forth the worthlessness of preaching which does not proceed from personal experience, and the supreme importance of the verification of truth by experience, we would insist with equal emphasis that the experience is begotten by the truth revealed by God, and that the authority of what is believed does not depend upon the affirmation of the believer

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

CONSCIENCE.

BY REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

Conscience is one of the most central terms and factors in all that appertains to moral conduct. It is highly important to have a right understanding of its nature and functions; and all the more, because those who seek to disparage its value grossly misrepresent it, attributing to it what does not belong to it; and because in popular thought and speech many erroneous and misleading ideas are prevalent respecting it.

I.—It is often regarded as the teacher or revealer of what is right. Some trust to it as an infallible guide, and to it have been given names that imply this. It has been called "the Moral Sense"; "the Moral Faculty"; "the Light Within." It has been spoken of as "the Still Small Voice," and defined as "the Voice of God in the Soul": a kind of heavenly voice whispering what things are right and wrong.

- II.—A closer investigation will show that this is a mistaken view, and that conscience cannot in itself be a reliable guide for moral conduct. It has been said that conscience points to what is right as the instinct of birds leads them to the south, or as the compass points to the north. But the instinct of migratory birds guides them all alike to the same southern region, and the needle of all compasses points to the same north pole; and if conscience is similar, it should, in any particular matter, point all men to the same thing, but this is clearly not so. In different men it often points in different directions: what the conscience of one man approves the conscience of another man condemns. Often conscience condemns or approves a thing at one time which it does not condemn or approve at a later time. In the past, Christian men approved of slavery, and believed it to be lawful and right; but now the conscience of almost every man condemns it as a most iniquitous wrong. We regard those men as grievously mistaken in their views, but we cannot think that they were all bad men, for no doubt they had the approval of their conscience. If conscience is an infallible guide to right and wrong conduct how can these things be reconciled? We must therefore conclude that conscience does not of itself teach what is morally right and what is morally wrong.
- III.—The real function of conscience is not to teach what is right, but to urge the doing of what is right, or rather what is *believed* to be right; and the shunning of what is believed to be wrong. It is the feeling possessed by every man that he ought to do one thing and ought not to do another thing. Its office is not to certify "the *rightness of ought*, but to insist upon the *oughtness of right*." That is, it does not say that what I think I ought to do is right, but it insists that whatever is right I ought to do. It does not furnish the knowledge as to what is right: this must be obtained from another source; but only urges that what is right must be done. When any conduct is recognised as right, conscience is the authoritative impulse commanding to do it. This conviction of "oughtness" is the very heart and centre of conscience. It is something unique and ultimate, and cannot be analysed. It is an inborn provision of our moral nature, involving a conscious obligation to do what we admit to be right. But, strictly, the object with which conscience deals is not what is actually and absolutely right, but what is honestly BELIEVED to be right. A man's action is governed by his belief, and his belief is based upon evidence and knowledge. A man's conscience does not commend him for what is right in itself, but for what he sincerely believes to be right at the time; and does not condemn him for what is wrong in itself, but for what he believes to be wrong. A thing may be wrong in itself, but if he believes it to be right, conscience will urge him to do it. Another thing may be right in itself, but if he believes it to be wrong, conscience will condemn him, if he does it (Rom. 14¹⁴). As belief is based upon evidence and knowledge and the judgments of the mind at the time, it follows that new light and fresh knowledge and better understanding of the facts may produce a change of belief, and then conscience will urge to conduct in the new direction, which may be directly opposite to what it was before. With respect to the same thing two men may have different degrees of light and knowledge, and therefore different beliefs regarding it; and, accordingly, one may think it right and the other may think it wrong. They will be urged in different directions, and each will plead the authority of conscience. The same change may take place in the same person, so that the same thing that at one time was approved by conscience as right may at a later time be condemned as wrong.

IV.—Besides acting as a force impelling to right conduct, conscience also performs the office of judge, pronouncing sentence, approving or condemning, inflicting reward or punishment, according as a man's action is in harmony with what he believes to be right. In order that belief may be in agreement with fact, there is required an authoritative standard of right conduct with which actual conduct may be compared and measured; not a standard fixed by each individual for himself, or there would be as many standards as individuals; but a higher standard by which all conduct may be tested and judged. Conscience itself does not provide that standard. But it assumes such a standard and simply decides whether conduct is in harmony with it; as a Judge in a law court does not create the law, but accepts it from another source, and only decides whether actions are in agreement with it.

V.—In the teaching of Scripture concerning conscience these points are exemplified. It does not countenance the idea that conscience prescribes what is right to do; but teaches that knowledge of right must come from another source, and that the office of conscience is to urge to the doing of it and to judge whether conduct is in harmony with it (John 8⁹). In the New Testament the word Conscience is used thirty times. St. Paul deals most largely with this subject. He says that for the Jew the standard was the written Law: the Oracles of God (Rom. 2¹²⁻¹⁹); for the heathen it was "the law written in their hearts," and shows that the work of conscience is to acquit or condemn, to "accuse or excuse" (Rom. 2¹⁵). When he was a bitter persecutor he had the approval of conscience (2 Tim. 1³). With the light and knowledge then possessed he believed that such a course was right (Acts 26⁹⁻¹¹), and that he was "doing God service" (John 16²), and therefore his conscience urged him to it. But with the acquisition of new light and knowledge he saw his error, and that he had done it "ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1¹³; Rom. 10²); and then his conscience condemned the same things that it formerly approved. In the New Testament the following aspects of conscience are spoken of:—a "good conscience," five times (Acts 23¹; 1 Tim. 1^{5, 19}; 1 Peter 3^{16, 21}); "a conscience void of offence" (Acts 24¹⁶); "conscience bearing witness" (Rom. 2¹⁵, 9¹); "the testimony of conscience" (2 Cor. 1¹²); "a pure conscience," three times (1 Tim. 3⁹; 2 Tim. 1³; Heb. 9¹⁴); "a weak conscience," three times (1 Cor. 8^{7, 10, 12}); "a defiled conscience" (Titus 1¹⁵); "an evil conscience" (Heb. 10²²); "a seared (or cauterised) conscience" (1 Tim. 4²). "Unfaithfulness to moral claims leads to fearful deterioration resulting in insensitiveness."

VI.—John Wesley's view of conscience, as contained in Sermon XII., is on the same lines as here stated. The following is a summary of what he there says:—The main business of Conscience is to excuse or accuse; to acquit or condemn. The rule by which men are to judge of right and wrong, and whereby their conscience is to be directed, is for the heathen "the law written on their heart"; but for Christians the rule of right and wrong is the Word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament. This is the whole and sole outward rule whereby a man's conscience is to be directed in all things. There must be a right understanding of the Word of God which is the only rule; then the agreement of our hearts and lives with that rule; then the inward perception or judgment of this agreement with our rule; then follows the approving verdict of conscience.

VII.—Some speak of “an erring conscience,” but this is not strictly correct. There is no such thing as an *erring* conscience. Conscience always urges the doing of what is believed to be right. No moral being can be found who feels that he ought to do what he believes to be wrong. As Kant says: “An erring conscience is a chimera.” When two men, in professed obedience to ~~the~~ conscience, act in different directions the difference is not in conscience at all, but in the understanding and judgment: the understanding of one being ignorant and dark, and the other instructed and enlightened. Neither is it correct to speak of “an *educated* conscience.” As Calderwood says: “Conscience intuitively recognises moral law. It is supreme in its authority and cannot be educated.” It is the understanding that can be educated. When conscientious conduct is wrong, the wrong is not in the conscience, but in the understanding and judgment. It is this that may be mistaken; it is here that imperfection lies; and it is with this that education has to do.

VIII.—From all this many practical results follow, of which two may here be noted. (1) A man's conduct cannot be justified merely by the plea that he has acted according to his conscience. He may sincerely do this and yet act very wrongly. It all depends whether he acted ignorantly, and had not the opportunity of obtaining better knowledge upon which to base correct judgment and belief; or whether he had opportunity for this and did not avail himself of it. (2) The necessity for an authoritative standard of duty and right conduct, such as we have in the Revelation that God has given in the Scripture; and the responsibility that lies upon the individual to acquaint himself with correct knowledge of the standard, so that he may form correct judgments and beliefs as based upon it. For conscience not only tells us to do what we believe to be right, but also to seek to know that what we *believe* to be right really and truly *is* right according to the standard given to us.

The Bible-Scheme of a League of Nations

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

The prevalent idea of Rationalistic Modernism that the Bible is a retarding influence upon the Progress of humanity is so strongly contrary to Fact that it is amazing that any man who thinks himself to be sane should entertain it for a moment. I challenge any man to mention a single truth that has been added to the Bible Revelation since the Canon of Holy Scripture was closed. The progress of theology during the 1800 years since the Revelation was completed has not been a progress that has added to what is taught in the Bible, but a progress that has consisted in a progressive discovery of its contents. I will also challenge any man to specify any truth of religion that **CAN** be added to the Scripture. I ask

what improvement could be made in a world that had attained the plan of human life set forth in God's prophetic word, a world in which God's will would be done on earth as it is in Heaven? When a man suggests to me that we need an ethical standard in advance of Bible ethics, I always inquire "Wherein?" Though I have put this question many times, I have never got an answer yet. I know that I shall never get an answer for this reason, that a world that had attained the Bible-standard would be "filled unto **ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD**" (Eph. 3¹⁹).

What is the matter with the Modern mind is that it has fallen back from the Bible plane, and instead of pursuing the path of Bible-Progress has entered upon a downward course of degeneration, the most advanced sample of which is to be seen in Germany which has sunk down into an abyss of learned degradation beneath that of savages. The "Kultur" of Germany demonstrates what is the result of a delusive Progress that imagines it can improve upon the Bible. What the world wants is to return to the pursuit of a Biblical Progress of humanity. The great mischief of the world is that it lags so far behind the Bible.

This Degeneration, proceeding from the abandonment of Bible ideals, is not confined to Germany. Of late years it has been proceeding with lightning speed throughout Christendom, and Great Britain is terribly infected with it. God has given to us many prophets who have spoken wise words of warning which, however, appear as yet to have made no approach to producing a national impression. Amongst these messages I will refer as specimens to those books of Arthur Mee and Stuart Holden—"The Fiddlers," "Defeat or Victory," and "The Parasite," and that awful book of Norman Maclean "Stand Up, Ye Dead."* I wish this book could be read by every person who can read the English language. The chapters on "The Empty Cradle" and "The Roots of the Evil" contain unspeakable revelations of the frightful moral pollution which is devouring the vitals of modern civilization, reducing the birth-rate, and threatening the British race with extermination, unless what may well be termed "The Rake's Progress" can be stayed. Recent returns concerning the frightful increase in the number of

* "Stand Up, Ye Dead" By Norman Maclean. Published by Hodder and Stoughton.

illegitimate births are an index that we are proceeding with cumulative velocity along the hideous course which Carlyle so powerfully described in that wonderful phrase of his :— "*Shooting Niagara, and After. . . . !*" It is time that we faced the facts. Is England going to become as Sodom and Gomorrah? Listen, for instance, to one quotation by Maclean from Dr. Ballantyne: "We have recently been told that there are 500,000 fresh cases of syphilis yearly in this country and three times that number of cases of gonorrhea." It is time that we spoke out with Biblical plainness concerning the abominations of fornication and all the filthiness of kindred corruptions, and that the conspiracy of criminal silence upon these subjects was ended. A prudery, which to a large extent fosters vice, and is sometimes a mask deliberately adopted in order to provide a hypocritical cover behind which the ghouls of impurity can pursue their deadly ravages, must be banished from our midst. There needs to be a crusade against indecent dress, against what is called on the Continent pornographic literature, that is to say, literature productive of the lusts of unchastity, pornographic art, nasty pictures in picturedromes, in illustrated papers, in picture-galleries, and elsewhere; in short, a crusade against all that aims at leading men into familiarity with "the depths of Satan" (Rev. 2²⁴). What the world needs is a return to the upward path of Bible ethics.

What is true concerning these questions of temperance and sex-morality is true also in relation to the ethics of politics and of commercial and international relations. What is wanted is to turn men's attention to the remedy for all the ills of mankind that is not waiting for discovery by human research, but is plainly revealed in that perfect chart of "*the times of the restitution of all things*" (Acts 3²¹) which God has set before us in the Bible.

President Wilson's League of Nations is not his discovery. It is God's plan as plainly displayed in Holy Scripture. In His Holy Word God "has made known to us the mystery of His will according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times to **SUM UP ALL THINGS IN CHRIST**, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Eph. 1^{9, 10}). God has made it plain that He will establish one commonwealth of humanity in which Christ Jesus shall be Supreme

Monarch, "where there **CANNOT** be Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Bondman, Freeman : but **CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL**" (Col. 3¹¹). The hope of the world lies in Bible-Religion, which is the only force that can break down the middle walls of partition between nation and nation, between Labour and Capital, between class and class—indeed all the middle walls of partition that prevent the realization of the Brotherhood of Humanity.

Such a League can only become an actual reality by the establishment of the spirit of Brotherhood in the hearts of men. No scheme of external organization can bring this to pass. All these artificial socialisms will be burnt up as tow in the flames of unregenerate human passion. The only hope of the world lies in a Regenerated Humanity. God's plan for the League of Nations to which President Wilson invites us is disclosed in Daniel's Fifth Monarchy (Dan. vii.). The true answer to the blaspheming horn of the antichristian world-power, such as the blasphemies of the Kaiser, who has dared to claim God as the patron of his piracies and Belgian outrages, is to be found in the establishment of that reign, the glories of which God revealed to Daniel in the vision concerning which Daniel says: "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him, and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Daniel tells us that it was revealed to him that this kingdom should be placed in the hands of God's Church. It was told him in the Divinely-given interpretation of the vision, "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. . . . And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to **THE PEOPLE OF THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH**, Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

The direct way to the establishment of President Wilson's League of Nations is indicated by the Monarch of this League Himself when He said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12³²). The

greatest thing we can do in order to bring to pass the establishment of this League is to resolve that 1918 shall be a year of a Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Ghost. I say to *resolve that this shall be*. God is always willing to bestow such gifts of grace upon the Church or the individual that will claim them. This is God's challenge to His people in all lands :—
"BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE that there may be meat in Mine house, and **PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH**, saith Jehovah of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3¹⁰). We have it in our own hands to make 1918 a year of world-wide revival such as would prepare the way for the realization of a real Brotherhood of Humanity. This glorious result can, however, only be secured by the Church giving herself to a great concert of prayer, and of *sacrificial bringing of the tithes into the storehouse*, making a reality of those words which Miss Havergal has put into our lips :—

Take my love. My Lord I pour
 At Thy feet its treasure-store.
 Take **MYSELF** and I will be
EVER, ONLY, ALL for Thee.

The Two Voices.

FRED. J. BROOKE.

THE world's discordant, out of joint,
 And pride and might do hack and slay ;
 Sweet gentleness and holy love
 Beneath a blood-red tyrant lay :
Yet o'er the world our Lord shall reign,
And man's fierce tyranny be vain.

E'en good men lose the old ideal
 That love is love when it forgives.
 Sore maimed by tide and circumstance,
 The best no longer in them lives.
Their surest Helper men forget,
And hug their hatreds and their fret.

Men say the angel-song of old,
 Which filled the air when Jesus came,
 And heralded the dawn of peace,
 No longer can attention claim.
*Yet this sweet song shall surely be
 The anthem of eternity.*

They say that Might must dominate,
 And Right in silence hide its head ;
 That blood-red deeds are requisite,
 And conscience must be quieted.
*Yet God's strong arm shall be made bare,
 And Love shall triumph everywhere.*

* * * * *

Men say that Jesus made mistakes,
 Was victim to environment :
 That old traditions crabbed His mind,
 And to His outlook crudeness lent.
*And yet our hungry hearts find bliss,
 Because to us He perfect is.*

They say He human was—not God,
 Of men the best, yet Man was He,
 That His great claim to Godhead fails
 And crumbles like His Deity.
*And yet He hushed the angry waves,
 And still the most abandoned saves.*

They say the great deeds that he wrought
 Were not what men have thought and said ;
 That He did not cast devils out,
 Nor give new life unto the dead.
*And yet we know our heart restored,
 And that its Healer is the Lord.*

They say the men who loved the Christ,
 And all adventured in His Name,
 Believing Him the Son of God,
 Mistook His nature and His claim.
*Yet these were they who shook the world,
 Whene'er His banner they unfurled.*

* * * * *

They say the Holy Word of God
 Is mixed with myths that are not true ;
 That Eastern minds are fanciful,
 And colour things beyond their due.
*Yet He the sacred parchment read
 As from the Lord by prophets said.*

The critics laud their unbelief
 As new-found knowledge, wise and true :
 The older teaching treat as vain
 And blind and sapless 'gainst the new.
*Yet is His Word for aye the test
 Of what is true and what is best.*

We know the Lord His Word inspired,
 We know His promises are sure ;
 And, though this crumbling earth expire,
 His truth for ever must endure.
*So at His feet we gladly lay
 Mind, body, soul—deride who may !*

And though a host of marshalled foes
 Do mock our faith and slight our Lord,
 They cannot shake our loyalty
 To Him or to His written Word.
*In Christ all glories are—shall be,
 For He is Truth's finality.*

So let men say just what they will,
 And question, cavil, as they please.
 Our Lord is He Who made the hill,
 The vale, the wind, the mighty seas—
*He holds our hand, sustains our heart ;
 From Him our souls shall ne'er depart.*

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Feeding Upon Gnats.

FRED. J. BROOKE.

There is a fable something like the following:—An Englishman making a tour in Norway landed at Sundal on the Mauranger fjord, and with others walked up the sunlit and beautiful valley which leads to the Bondhus lake, after crossing which he and they continued their walk to the glacier of that name. He then with some enthusiasts climbed one of the great mountains and crossed that wonderful ice-field called the Folgefond. It was a longer and more laborious journey than he expected, and he had forgotten to carry lunch with him, with the result that when, after several toilsome and hungry hours he descended a path to a valley where there was a good hotel, he declared, "I have nothing left inside me." Mine host soon provided an excellent repast and called the guests. For a while our friend sat at the table and watched his companions feasting upon salmon (for which Norway is famous), and his own plate was well laden with the

tasty fish. Instead of eating the tempting food, he exclaimed, "I die of hunger," and to the amazement of his friends, rushed out of the room and began catching one by one some gnats that frolicked in the sunshine. After a few moments he sank in exhaustion upon the ground, and moaned out, "Gnats don't satisfy, but they are better than salmon," and died.

* * * * *

There never was a time when the world was as hungry for comfort as now. The tendrils of the mind and the heart are sending out feelers on every hand crying for solace and hope and balm for their wounded spirits. In olden days the physicians led such distressed ones to the Balm of Gilead and to the "Sure promises of God," knowing from their own experience that when "This poor man cried the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." They knew there was ample provision in the Divine heart and storehouse, and that "they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Then the poor were satisfied with bread . . . with good things . . . were abundantly satisfied . . . with God's goodness, and so the troubled and the heart-broken and the sin-stained found in Him a resting-place, and He made them glad.

There was "No other name," "No other fountain," but here, in Him, the world's Redeemer, was a Fountain where whosoever would might get all needs supplied. He never failed. The mourner was comforted, the sinner saved, and the dying saw all their sins on Jesus laid.

From ten thousand broken hearts the cry now comes, "Who will shew us any good?" and instead of pointing to Jesus as the Only Way, the One Universal Saviour, Who is still saying to the world, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest," many official leaders are substituting for Jesus the old heresy of Mahomet, "Who dies fighting for his country goes straight to Paradise." The tongue that sounds forth this blasphemy is not only cruel and heartless, but bespeaks a heart that is derelict, with no vision of truth, no mystic fellowship with the mind and spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, no real pity for the anguished heart, and no true soul and mind-saving message.

More or less this lamentable heresy is found in all the Churches. The organ of the Y.M.C.A. declares :—

"However evil his past may have been, a man redeems it by giving his life for his country's good; when he goes before the judgment-seat of God, his sacrifice will outweigh the sins in his past in the scales of Divine justice."

The Bishop of Birmingham said :—

"The man who had died for England, believing that his country's cause was the cause of God, and who might have gone over the parapet with an oath on his lips, might still be received by Christ with the words, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'"

In pulpit and press this heartless foisting of an untruth is being used to mollify the sores and dull the sorrows of the heart-stricken, and the true sources of help—God's love, God's compassion and God's healing Balm in the Saviour of Men—are neglected. With un pitying cruelty this sentimentalism is crying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." The only sacrifice for sin is that of "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." All else is vain.

Men and women are being offered "gnats" instead of the feast spread on the Divine table. The unsatisfying provision of a blasphemy is trumpeted instead of the Truth as it is in Jesus, and disappointed and famishing hearts are offered husks that the swine did eat, whilst the Father is beckoning to home and love and the fatted calf.

In relation to this cruel fallacy the President of the Gloucestershire Free Church Council recently received the following letter from the Rev. Dr. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle :—

"MY DEAR MR. STEELE,

I am very glad to learn that you are interested in the question, which is one of such solemn moment at the present time, of the soldiers who die bravely for their country, and their eternal welfare.

I am sure that our noble fellows have a good conscience that they are fighting in a righteous cause, and I am one with them in that; but I am sure that the prevalent teaching that a khaki uniform is a robe of righteousness is an erroneous and dangerous doctrine. Because a man dies with a good conscience that he is laying down his life in a just cause, that is no passport to heaven. After all, there are thousands of civilians who are living moral, respectable lives, with a good 'conscience' so far as the discharge of their earthly duty is concerned—and they may even die through some accident met in the course of their duty—but that will not secure their entrance into heaven. Yet on the score of 'conscience' they might claim it as much as the soldier. I fear that the war is responsible for a wave of sentimentalism which has led many astray.

The one hope of eternal life, for both soldiers and civilians, is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. Through Him the King—

dom of Heaven is opened to all believers ; and it is surely as easy for a soldier to believe as any other person. Indeed, the testimony of many is that facing death in the trenches has brought them to see their need of salvation as they never did before, and resulted in definite conversion. But if they are to be saved it can only be through the atoning merit of Jesus Christ. There is really no need why one should be lost, for salvation is theirs, as it is ours, by trusting His finished work.

Very cordially yours,

A. C. DIXON.

Has the voice of the prophets failed because "there is no open vision." "Where there is no vision the people perish." Are the words of Amos being fulfilled : "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord : And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." And must we admit with Isaiah, "The priest and prophet have erred . . . they err in vision, they stumble in judgment" ; and with Jeremiah, "Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name : I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them : they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you : they make you vain : they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord."

Recent and Mysterious Providential Changes on the Earth's Surface.

REV. D. GATH WHITLEY.

When Man sinned and fell God not only punished him in his person, but also pronounced a curse upon the Earth which was his dwelling-place. This curse is described in Genesis iii. 17-18, where we read the following words—"Cursed is the ground for thy sake—thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."

Sceptics and Higher Critics of course disbelieve and ridicule this Primeval Curse, but we shall produce evidence

from Science to show that the Earth bears marks on its face to-day which show how the Curse pronounced at the Fall of Man has fallen upon it.

The Primeval Curse on the Ground of the Earth is two-fold : Direct and Indirect.

The *Indirect* effect of the Curse is shown by the ruin which Man brings upon Nature. He ruins fair regions by turning them into deserts. He cuts down the forests, so that the rain diminishes, the rivers dry up, and the land becomes barren from want of water. In his mad search for wealth he turns fruitful lands into barren wastes. He ruins whole countries by wars. He destroys wild animals needlessly, and inflicts untold sufferings on those he domesticates. He poisons the air and pollutes the running waters with the smoke and refuse from his factories and chemical works. Man by his wickedness makes the whole Creation groan under bondage.

The *Direct* evidences of the Curse seem to be those which appear in regions where Man has been powerless to bring about such changes. In proving this we shall now produce testimony from two more sciences ; Geology and Physical Geography. We refer the reader to the following regions.

(1). *The Arctic Regions round the North Pole.* It is an astonishing fact that Geology shows that there were no Arctic Regions of ice and snow before the Creation of Man ! Before Man's origin the lands around the North Pole had a *warm climate*, and splendid forests grew in grand luxuriance. There was no ice on sea and land then round the North Pole. The water was as hot as it is now within the Tropics, and great reefs of Coral—which only grow in the *hottest waters*—flourished in the Arctic Seas. The heat was then so great that the North Polar Regions were then a veritable Paradise. But about the time of Man's Creation or shortly after a terrible change took place. The climate changed *rapidly*, and the Arctic Regions became an awful wilderness of ice and snow.

(2). *The Desert of the Sahara.* Across all Northern Africa stretches the Great Desert of the Sahara. It is a waste of burning sand, barren rocks, and stony wildernesses, with oases here and there. But this vast expanse was not always a desert. Before the time of the Creation of Man it was a fertile region, covered with forests, full of lakes, and

traversed by grand rivers. The remains of these forests still exist petrified in the deserts, while the great dry valleys through the rivers flowed southwards to the Congo, and eastwards to the Nile can still be seen. In recent geological times a strange change took place. The rivers were cut off from the sea and dried up. The climate lost its moisture, and the lakes shrunk up into marshes, until at last the present sandy wilderness was produced. What occasioned this terrible change ?

(3). *Central Asia.* In the centre of Asia there exists an immense basin, bounded by the Thian Shan mountains on the north of the Kuen-lun mountains on the south. It is narrow on the west, but broadens out to the east where it merges into the Desert of Gobi. It is a vast dreary waste of burning sands and barren hills. Before the Creation of Man it was a great Inland Sea, which joined the Arctic Ocean. In recent geological times this Inland Sea was mysteriously drained, only lakes being left which are fast drying up.⁽¹⁾ Also, most of the deserts which now cover the region east of the Caspian Sea were before Man's Creation covered with water, which made Central Asia then a beautiful and fertile region. But this great sea also dried up not long ago, geologically speaking, and only the present sandy deserts were left behind, and the drying up of the country is still going on. What brought about this change ? Man did not, and we can only conclude that it was owing to mysterious changes Providentially guided.

(4). *South Africa.* The middle of South Africa south of the Zambesi river is now a desert, which becomes worse as the western coast is approached, where it merges into sandy wastes and barren hills. The edges are fertile, but the whole district is drying up. Before the Creation of Man and perhaps for some time after it was a splendid region of great rivers, broad lakes, grassy plains, and grand forests. But a wonderful change came over this beautiful region in geological-speaking recent times. Tremendous volcanic eruptions took place, which changed the face and altered the drainage of the whole region. So terrible were the volcanic convulsions that a portion of South Africa nearly as large as Great Britain is covered by a vast sea of lava. The moisture in the atmos-

(1) The reader is advised to consult good maps when reading this article.

phere decreased ; the rivers dried up although their now dry valleys can still be seen. Thus the state of South Africa bears witness to the Curse which fell upon the Earth when Man sinned at the Fall.

(5). *North America.* For 1500 miles west of the Rocky Mountains there extends a vast desert. But we particularly refer to the basin of the Colorado river (which flows into the Gulf of California) and to the region which lies to the north of it in the States of Utah and Nevada. Most of this region is now a barren desert of sand and clay, with rocky mountains and sterile plains, whose only vegetation is sage-bush and cactus. But before the Creation of Man it was a beautiful region full of great lakes and rivers, and covered with a splendid vegetation. It was a veritable Eden of trees, flowers, verdant meadows, and crystal streams. But in geologically-speaking recent times an extraordinary change occurred. Fearful volcanic eruptions burst out, which poured forth vast floods of lava larger than any found in the world. Mountains were upheaved ; rivers were drained ; the supply of moisture was cut off ; the lakes dried up, and the whole region became a barren desert. Man had nothing to do with these tremendous changes, and they are clearly the result of climatic changes Providentially brought about.

In the last four articles we have presented the evidence which Science gives in favour of the truth of the Biblical narrative of the Fall of Man. The Higher Critics in their arrogance and presumption reject the story of Man's Fall because they say that it is opposed to Science. They are like men asleep, who in their dreams continue to murmur and babble about Science. We awake them, and bid them look at the numerous proofs which Science itself presents of the truth of the story of Man's Fall.

It is not unreasonable to think that there may be a connection between the changes in Physical Geography to which we have referred, and Providential Intervention, especially in view of the declaration of the Curse upon the Earth contained in the Inspired Narrative of the Fall, and the many affirmations in the Scripture that Sin *has* caused, and *does* cause many convulsions in the Physical Creation.

The Higher Critics are stupefied and astounded, for they had never heard of these scientific discoveries which they see for the first time.

In defence of the truth of the Bible narrative of the Fall of Man we have produced facts and evidences from *five* different sciences. Namely—Psychology ; Comparative Religion ; Archæology ; Geology ; and Physical Geography ; and each has furnished us with a perfect series of facts, proofs and illustrations.

Behold then, the evidences which the Author of Holy Scripture has permitted us to discover in defence of the truth of His Written Word ! What could be more convincing ; and what have those who deny or explain away the truth of the Bible to say against this tremendous array of evidences which Science brings forward against them ?

Surely, these depravers of Holy Scripture may be addressed in the words of the Prophet—"Behold, ye despisers and wonder : for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Whilst the humble and believing Christian, regarding the same series of proofs with wonder and thankfulness exclaims—"Thy Word is very sure ; therefore thy servant loveth it."

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

No. XXV.

BIBLE TOUCHES WITH PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

BY REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

The Bible's treatment of scientific matters has often been made a ground of objection against it. This has been done in violation of reason and fairness ; and wilfully disregarding the fact that the Bible is not a Book of Science, and was never intended to be. But although this is not its object, yet being the most comprehensive Book in the world, and dealing with every subject, it has numerous statements and allusions relating to the order of nature and the physical constitution of the universe. It speaks of these things not in technical phraseology, but in common terms, and familiar language understood by all. For the most part it describes natural phenomena, not so much as they are in themselves, but rather, as the term "phenomena" means, according to the appearances which they present to us and to our senses. And therefore there is no weight in such an objection as that which says that, contrary to the fact, it speaks of the sun rising and setting, and of the apparent movement of the sun in relation to the earth, and the like. Such language has always prevailed and prevails to-day. We all speak thus continually ; and even the most eminent scientists in their common speech use exactly the same language.

There are two or three remarkable facts bearing on this subject which deserve our careful notice. On these matters the wisest of ancient teachers

cherished the most absurd and ludicrous notions, as their extant writings abundantly show; but from such erroneous ideas the Bible, from beginning to end, is entirely free. Its treatment of questions that touch the realm of physical science is only elementary and casual. This was to be expected, because anything more would have been quite out of harmony with the design and purpose that Divine Revelation had in view. But it is a noteworthy fact that in its numerous allusions to the constitution of the universe it contains nothing that subsequent discovery has had to contradict. Not only this, but it also gives many hints and germs and suggestions of those higher truths which in early times could not be known or understood: truths which it has been the function of scientific research to discover and demonstrate.

I.—ERRONEOUS NOTIONS OUTSIDE THE BIBLE. The Chinese, as well as the old Greeks, held that there were five elements (wood, metal, earth, fire and water), and that these exerted omnipotent influence upon all affairs human and divine. The Hindu Vedas contain most fantastic notions. According to these sacred books the moon is 50,000 leagues higher than the sun, and shines with its own light. Night is caused by the sun setting behind a great mountain, situated in the middle of the earth, and several thousand miles high. The earth is flat and of triangular shape, composed of seven stages, each having its own inhabitants and its own sea; and the whole mass is borne on the heads of countless elephants which, in shaking themselves, cause earthquakes in this world. Anaxagoras conceived the sun to be a mass of iron, larger than the southern half of Greece; and the earth to be a huge mountain whose roots stretched infinitely downwards. Nearly all the ancients, including the renowned Aristotle, imagined the heavens to be a solid sphere, to which were attached the fixed stars, which they thought were made of crystal. Not only the ancients but many in Christian times, and in quite recent days, held the fantastic systems of astrology, maintaining that the stars and planets exercised a mighty influence on the character of men, and on the whole course of human affairs. As to the earth, Greek and Roman philosophers denied the suggestion that it might be a round globe, and ridiculed the theory of Antipodes as an absurdity. They thought it meant "the existence of men having their feet above their heads, and trees with their fruit hanging downwards." All this was accepted even by the fathers of the Christian Church. Augustine said that the notion of Antipodes was opposed to the Scriptures; and later a bishop was condemned and excommunicated by the Pope as a heretic "for asserting the existence of other men under this earth." At the time of Isaac Newton's birth, in 1642, the great Galileo, at the age of 80, was languishing in a Roman prison for discovering and maintaining "the movement of the earth." Mohammed's Koran declares that the mountains were created "to prevent the earth from moving, and to hold it fast as if with anchors and cables." Such are a few specimens of the errors and absurdities into which the wisest sages of antiquity and their successors fell on these matters. They are mentioned here for the purpose of emphasising the complete contrast between them and the Book of God.

II.—THE BIBLE FREE FROM SUCH ERRORS. The Bible consists of 66 books. It is the work of 40 or 50 different writers, of every rank and condition, and of every degree of human culture. They lived and worked through a period of 1,500 years: from Moses, who lived centuries before the earliest philosophers of Greece, down to St. John in

the first century of the Christian era. They spoke of almost everything. They told the story of creation, the structure of the heavens, the creation of light, the atmosphere, the waters, mountains, animals and plants; and constantly described the processes of nature and the grandeur of the world. They did this in the manifold styles of narrative, poetry and psalmody; and full of oriental imagery, variety, boldness and flights of imagination. And yet in all this there are none of those errors and absurdities that abound in other ancient writers when they speak of the physical constitution and condition of the world. In them there is nothing that the investigations and discoveries of later times have had to disprove and correct. These men of themselves had no more means of attaining truth and avoiding error in these matters than the philosophers and sages of other lands; but they have so written as to be free from all such error. Whence comes this? It is a remarkable example of the Guiding Hand; and an unanswerable proof of the Divine Authorship and Inspiration of the Scriptures which these men were taught to write.

III.—HINTS OF HIGHER TRUTHS. Not only is the Bible free from such errors, but it contains many hints, and germs, and foreshadowings, of which the ancients had no idea, and which nothing but the invention of the telescope, and the methods of modern science have enabled us to realise and understand. Only a few instances can here be indicated. It speaks of the earth as a circle or globe (Isa. 40²²; Job 26¹⁰ R.V.; Prov. 8²⁷ R.V.); and describes its position in space by saying that God "hangeeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26⁷). In describing the heavens it uses the correct term, not "firmament," but the Hebrew "EXPANSE" (space, void, immensity) (Gen. 1⁶). In speaking of Light it represents it as independent of the sun, and as created three epochs before it (Gen. 1^{4,14}); thus anticipating the modern scientific theory of a universal ETHER everywhere diffused, whose vibrations would produce the various phenomena both of light and gravitation. It speaks of the air as having "weight" (Job 28²⁵): a fact which was unknown until the time of Galileo. It assigns all the races and tribes of men to one common origin (Gen. 4¹; Acts 17²⁶): a fact which for long ages was disputed and rejected; but which modern Ethnology is compelled to acknowledge. It ascribes all human language to a primitive unity (Gen. 11¹⁻⁹). Until modern times this was thought to be contradicted and disproved by many anomalies in language itself; but a more profound Philology now confirms its truth. The proportional dimensions of Noah's ark (Gen. 6¹⁵) were long thought to be so defective that safe floating would be impossible; but they are now found to be a model for ship-building, "the best for combining strength, capacity, and stability"; and it is said that the great ocean liners are now built on the same principle. In the catalogue of Ptolemy the number of the stars was put down as 1,022; and before the invention of the telescope the eye, even on the finest night, could not see more than a thousand; but the Bible speaks of them in language which covers the utmost requirements of modern science in relation to the countless occupants of limitless space. It calls them "innumerable," and compares them (as the greatest astronomers do) to "the sand on the sea shore" (Gen. 22¹⁷; Psal. 147⁴; Isa. 40²⁶⁻²⁷; Heb. 11¹²).

These hints and foreshadowings and many others similar to them could not possibly be known to human wisdom at the time they were uttered, and could not be realised or understood until light was shed

upon them by the actual discoveries of later times. The view of the case here briefly touched upon furnishes clear demonstration that behind the human writers there was the Divine Author to Whom all things are known from the beginning to the end ; and becomes a convincing argument for the Authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures.

Our Lord's View of the Old Testament.

REV. SHERWIN SMITH, M.A., B.D.

Our Lord was the Son of God, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, ... Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man. Of what value was His view of the Old Testament ?

The Old Testament was just the same in His day as it is in ours. It has not altered one iota. What He read, we read ; what we read, He read. Surely we cannot say that we read it more carefully than He did. What is the advantage that we have in reading it which He had not ? We are not nearer its times than He was. It may be said that there have been discoveries of clay tablets and stone monuments containing temporary records, which His generation had no knowledge of. But these, in so far as they have any influence, corroborate the Bible rather than otherwise. They make the Bible stand out in the setting of its times all the more. Higher Criticism does not rest upon any added knowledge or facts concerning Bible times or Bible people. It rests upon another way of looking at the Bible from that of old times. The very same chapters, the very same people, the very same words are all there ; but the eyes are upon different things in the same Book. Higher Critics will say to those who hold the old views, " What about such-and-such difficulties which our views attempt to solve and yours don't ? " We reply, " But what about the fresh difficulties which your views bring in ?—who solves them ? "

Now the Higher Critics have this age behind them. In fact, they are not so much leaders of the age, as exponents of it. The modern mind has a bias their way. Men's thoughts run easily on critical lines. They have become steeped in methods of analysis. They have lost the sense of the miraculous, of the world beyond this world. They are preternatur-

ally acute in weighing up all that passes before the eye. But all the world of wonder and awe, where more is meant than meets the eye, is a sealed book to them and makes them uneasy. They are afraid of getting lost. It seems so lawless and offensive a world.

Now old-fashioned people had their limitations, and are not to be upheld in every respect. Their views of the Bible tended to extremes, to the extremes which were natural to their type of thinking. When, therefore, anyone resists Higher Criticism, he is often met with the poser, "Are you going back to those old extremes? I am surprised at a man of your perception thinking of doing so." But that is going on a little too fast. For a man may hold the old-fashioned views without going to the extremes, and in doing so he is treading in the footsteps of his Master. For though Jesus Christ corrected the extremes of orthodox thought, when it comes to a choice between the orthodox view and modern criticism, He most decidedly comes down on the orthodox side. This fact constitutes the real tug of war—the Orthodox View *plus* Jesus Christ against the Higher Critical View *plus* the tendency of the age. Let us put one View over against the other View, and for the moment allow that as Views they are equal to and cancel one another. There is left, therefore, on one side, Jesus Christ; on the other side, the tendency of the age. Will Jesus Christ pull the tendency of the age over to His way of thinking, or will the *Zeit-Geist* pull Jesus over? That is the true struggle.

Now let us be quite sure that Jesus Christ is on the orthodox side in this matter. It may be said that we are dependent on human records for our account of Jesus, and how do we know that those records are infallible? Are we not assuming what we started out to prove? But in this argument we are not depending on the absolute literal accuracy of those records, so that every word as reported must be Christ's. We are depending on the outlook of mind of Jesus as revealed in the records, and that outlook is unmistakable. Some of the Critics say that he had a human type of mind which took after the idiosyncrasies of His age, and thought just as they did; and this in spite of the fact that He had also a divine mind. But without arguing the question of the influence upon Him of the idiosyncrasies of of His age and its type of mind, it is particularly noteworthy

that our Lord gave no judgments or opinions on subjects on which further light has come since His day. He said nothing about the earth being flat, or the circulation of the blood, or the astronomical system, or gravitation, or slavery, or the democratic system. He spoke about the things which are always the same from age to age, about human nature, about the events of the Old Testament, and about the lessons to be learnt from them. He had an eye for faces and personalities, rather than for philosophics and schemes of thought. He laid hold of those things which never vary.

He may be said to have corrected the old-fashioned view, when in its fidelity to the letter of the Bible it perverted the spirit. Thus, when they took the words "God rested" and used them to enforce an unnaturally idle Sabbath day, He said in correction, "My Father worketh until now." Also, He developed certain Commandments as they were given to Moses, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you. . . ." Nevertheless, He accepted the Old Testament from beginning to end as the true record of God's dealings with this particular man and that particular man at such-and-such a time, and His references to the Old Testament approximate to a doctrine of Verbal Inspiration. He was fond of saying, "As it was in the days of Noah," and "As it was in the days of Lot." Those actual historical events showed forth the principles of God's dealings, and help us to predict what will happen in our case. "From the days of the righteous Abel to those of Zechariah, whom they slew between the porch and the altar, shall all the righteous blood shed upon the earth be required of this generation." He also accepted the most difficult event in the Old Testament, and found in it a principle of God's dealing, which shed light upon His own experience. "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, even so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." He was interested in the *actual* existence of Abraham—"Before Abraham was, I am"—in the *actual* fact that David dared to eat the shrew-bread, in the *actual* strangers to Israel, the foreigners, upon whom Elijah and Elisha worked their miracles. So one might go on. It is this feeling for fact which everyone notices about our Lord Jesus. It is regarded to-day as a unique and outstanding thing about Him. But what becomes of the value of our

Lord's mind as a guide to the facts of life and to the facts of eternity, if in regard to the facts of the Old Testament He is completely at sea? No new light has come about Jonah, and yet modern criticism says it is a parable. No new light has come on the histories of Elijah and Elisha, and yet modern criticism says they are unhistorical wonder-stories. No new light has come upon Daniel, and yet we are told that it is an imaginative story, embodying historical traditions. Jesus Christ read these books; He had a supreme gift for fact; He said these were facts. and yet modern criticism contradicts Him in His stronger point, and says they are not facts.

This is the struggle—the tendency of the age as represented by Higher Criticism, against the mind of Jesus. When to the human qualities of His mind we add His divine Nature, His being the Son of God from eternity, the One through Whom God made the worlds and the ages; and also we add the mission He came on to be the Truth and to save men from error, why should we continue the struggle any longer? He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. Let us have that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus, and let us be intellectually submissive and have that Mind about the Bible. It is needed in all spheres, and it will come, but God has a way of beginning with the Bible, and it is under That Impulse that the Wesley Bible Union has sprung into being.

Notes.

To our Readers—

N.B. We wish to remind our readers that subscriptions for the Journal for 1918 should be paid in advance (2/- per annum, post free), and that great labour in the office would be saved if our friends would send at once without waiting for notice to the Secretary:—Rev. Harold C. Morton, B.A., 24 Carllsle Terrace, The Hoe, Plymouth. We also call attention to the fact that the 2/- does not cover the cost, and the Committee will be thankful for donations or subscriptions to the Funds of the Wesley Bible Union.

On May 1st, Mr. John Duxbury will give Recitals at the Temperance Hall, Huddersfield, in aid of the Funds of the Wesley Bible Union. At these Recitals the aims of the Union will be stated. A Stall for the Sale of Useful and Fancy Articles will be open in connection with these gatherings. If any of our friends would send goods or money for the Sale, these will be gratefully received by Miss Bennetts, Wesley Manse, Norman Park, Huddersfield.

The Supreme Duty of Searching the Scriptures.

We of the Wesley Bible Union should demonstrate the sincerity of our belief that the Bible is the complete, authoritative, infallible, and final revelation of God to mankind by our diligence and constancy in its study. In saying this we would insist upon the study of the text of Scripture itself. There is a great danger that people may regard the study of books about the Bible rather than the study of the Bible itself as constituting Biblical scholarship. The only use of books about the Bible is to induce a closer study of the text of Scripture itself, and a more thorough and intimate acquaintance with the text. Dr. Parker was very fond of insisting upon the importance of reading the Bible straight through. We would like to join in that insistence, and even more earnestly would we plead for a frequent rapid reading of separate books of Scripture as, for instance, the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, so that the mind may have before it in a single bird's-eye view the general scope and thread of thought of the book. It is of great value to sit down and read through a book of Scripture at one sitting. We would urge that our readers should try the experiment of this with the Gospel of John, and we think they would be surprised at the result. The following out of Dr. Parker's injunction about frequently reading the Bible through would lead to the discovery of many unrecognized gems of exquisite poetry and deep illuminating spiritual instruction hidden away in some of the most unlikely places, such, for instance, as that wonderful record of the last words of David in the 2 Sam. xxiii., 1-7, one of the most remarkable passages in the Bible, very striking in our English versions, but far more so in the original Hebrew. Let the reader omit the italicized words in our English versions and we think he will feel that he is reading the actual broken words of the dying seer, who was telling as he gasped for breath of the visions of the Messiah's kingdom which were passing before his eyes. At an earlier period of his life David wrote about "the valley of the shadow of death." When he came to die, it was no valley of shadow, but he said:—"It is as the light of the morning. The sun is rising: a morning without clouds; as the tender grass out of the earth by clear shining after rain He hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure: all my salvation and all desire."

The Value of Concordance Bible Study.

It is not only the straight-forward reading of Scripture that we would urge, but the diligent use of the concordance by means of which the general teaching of the Bible can be learnt by tracing the leading terms of religious thought through the Scriptures, in order to ascertain the mind of the Holy Ghost by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." In speaking of the concordance study of the Bible we, of course, would lay special stress upon the value of a concordance to the Hebrew and Greek originals and of such concordances as Young's and Strong's, which endeavour to put the English reader as far as possible in possession of the exact meaning of the original words. In touching upon this subject, Concordance Bible Study, we would call attention to the kindred method of the use of Scripture references, such especially as the excellent edition of *the Revised Version with Marginal References*, and the edition of *the Revised Version of the New Testament with Fuller References*. Of the excellence of this last we cannot speak too strongly. It is based upon a more scholarly and scientific method than any other system of references with which we are acquainted, and keeps steadily in view the proper meaning in the original of the passages to which they are attached.

The Bible Always Its Own Best Commentary.

It is important always to keep before us the fact that the Bible is a People's Book, addressed to men of all classes of human life, and expressed in language concerning which we are told that "he may run that readeth it" (Hab. 2²) and "the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Is. 35⁸). The truth of Scripture is not to be found in the schools of philosophical hairsplitting or of scholarly refinements and niceties, but is to be learnt by the average intelligence of the devout and prayerful reader. Some of those whose general knowledge is so deficient as almost to place them on the margin of illiteracy are often better versed in the real knowledge of Bible-truth than many doctors of divinity. He is unquestionably the best Biblical scholar who knows most perfectly what the Bible itself teaches. Few of the scholastics have ever approached anywhere within sight of John Bunyan in their knowledge of the Bible.

The Incalculable Value of All Real Learning in Relation to Bible-Study.

But we would not be understood to depreciate the importance of any learning in relation to Bible-truth. All truth has a direct bearing upon the proper understanding of the Bible. All truth is precious to God. Theology is the queen of the sciences, and has its points of contact with them all. As Rev. W. Backhouse, Rev. D. Gath Whitley, and Rev. Sherwin Smith shew us so well in their able articles in another part of this number of our *Journal*, the whole universe is in touch with the body of truth that is presented to us in Holy Scripture, and Science and Scripture reciprocally illustrate one the other. Take, for instance, this passage in Is. 40, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His power, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth." How much more does this mean to the instructed astronomer than to the man who knows nothing of the marvels of the starry heavens! When in this *Journal* we have spoken strongly against the scholasticism that hides and often perverts the truth by the inventions of man, we would not be understood as neglecting to recognize the value of real learning, the learning of facts and of sound reason, in the exposition of Scripture. We would wish to give special emphasis to the incalculable value of a knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew originals of the Scriptures. We would urge all our readers, if they can possibly do so, to strive to acquire such knowledge of Hebrew and Greek as to enable them to read with intelligence the best commentaries on the original text. Further, knowledge of the general history of the world, especially of the points of contrast between sacred and profane history, is essential for the full interpretation of the Bible. The chronological discussions necessary for the complete understanding of Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks (Dan. 9²⁴⁻²⁷) is an illustration of the value of historical learning in the realms of Biblical study. Were there more real learning prevalent in Christian circles, the flimsy guesses and baseless hypotheses of the Higher Criticism, so misnamed, would not so easily impose upon the credulity of the churches.

The Light Shining in a Dark Place.

In the dark place of this terrible hour, with the awful shadows of the great apostasy produced by the evolution philosophy, and "the Higher Criticism," so misnamed, the more sure word of prophecy shines forth as the dayspring from on high. Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are photo-

graphs of the present hour. Dan. 7^{20, 21}, Rev. 13⁴⁻⁷ are a portrait of the Kaiser. 2 Tim. 3—4⁴ is a description of the modernist apostasy so exact that if it had been written to-day, it could not more completely touch the spot.

The Fulfilled Predictions of Holy Scripture are Standing Miracles.

We said this in the last number of our *Journal*, and we wish to state a little more explicitly what we mean. A prediction made long before the event which is exactly fulfilled stands before us as a thing manifestly from God. This fact is then the same as a miracle performed before our eyes would be. We have the prediction and know unquestionably that the prophecy was in existence, in many cases, centuries before the event that fulfils it. These two facts constitute a miracle which permanently exists in the pages of the Bible. As an illustration of what we mean, take the instance of Daniel's prophecy of the 69 prophetic weeks which the angel told him would intervene between the edict for rebuilding Jerusalem and the crucifixion of Christ. This prophecy was 400 years before the event. It stands there before us as an obvious miracle. God alone could have communicated this knowledge to Daniel. This is only a specimen of a vast body of Biblical prediction that has been already fulfilled, the value of which as a demonstration of the Divine authorship of the Bible it is impossible to exaggerate. The evidential value of these predictions is greatly enhanced by their construction and the method of their fulfilment. God's prophecies are so constructed that they do not admit of human anticipation of their fulfilment in such a way as to enable men to work out their accomplishment by design. Further, in the general scheme of the fulfilment of prophecy God's over-ruling Providence has so directed the movements of history that in the onward march of the Kingdom of God the prophecies have been fulfilled not by human design, but *in spite* of the efforts of man. Nebuchadnezzar's dream describes the way in which the "stone cut out of the mountain WITHOUT HANDS" (*with no device of man*) overwhelms the schemes and plans of men with an avalanche of surprise. Real history does not move upon the lines of the probable and the anticipated but on the lines of the improbable and unexpected. The scheme of history by which the so-called Higher Criticism seeks to destroy the history of chronicled fact, and which sets down as mythical what its canon of rationalistic probability declares to be incredible, is a scheme that is contradicted by the actual experience of mankind that has crystallized itself into the generally accepted axiom: "*Truth is stranger than fiction.*"

The Pitfalls of Prophetic Study.

The study of Prophecy has many pitfalls in consequence of which there has been during recent decades a tendency to avoid it. As we have seen above, the Holy Spirit has taken care so to hide its meaning that men shall not be able to anticipate its fulfilment in such a way as to work it out by design, or to seek to prevent its fulfilment. Consequently, those who are spending their time in speculative attempts to discern beforehand the lines on which prophecy will be fulfilled have all along the ages fallen into mazes of erroneous exposition. Prophecy never furnishes any food for the curiosity that seeks to pry into the occult secrets of the future. Those who occupy themselves with elaborate charts of the prophetic plan of the future are wasting their own time and the time of those who read them. This waste of time is mischievous, not only on account of the loss of the

precious treasure of time itself, but because it tends to distract Christian people from their proper work of building themselves up in holiness and seeking to extend the Redeemer's kingdom.

The Value of Prophetic Study.

What then is the value of Prophetic study? It is one of the most valuable evidences of truth of Scripture, and the prophecies that have been fulfilled are a pledge of the fulfilment of those which are as yet unfulfilled. Further, with respect to the future, although it is foolish to waste time in guesses about the details of God's prophetic plan for the future, and although such speculative schemes, like that of the Jewish false conception of the Messiah, may have the effect of blinding the eyes to the true fulfilment when it comes, yet the prophetic word prepares the Church so that she is not taken by surprise by assaults of the forces of anti-christ, and also sustains her by its assurance of the ultimate triumph of the Redeemer. In this present world-crisis this certainty that Daniel's Fifth Monarchy is coming is a glorious light in the midst of the darkness, and should arouse all to put forth their utmost endeavours to conquer the world for Christ.

The Sinfulness of Waste.

When our Lord in the miracle of the loaves and fishes had taught the world symbolically that it is the multiplying hand of God in the processes of nature that turns the sower's handfuls of grain into abundant harvests sufficient for the needs of all mankind, he added a reminder that God's lavish bounty should never be made an excuse for waste, saying:—"*Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost*" (John 6¹²). This lesson is being pressed upon our attention by the food-shortage of this present hour. Every one of us ought to realize that, especially at a time like this, we ought to use the utmost economy to save even crumbs as far as possible, so that no wastefulness of ours may do anything to deprive others of the necessities of life. How amazing it is that in presence of the present need the public opinion of this country should tolerate the continuance of the destruction of foodstuffs for the manufacture of beverages that are not only useless either for food or medicine, but are productive of disease, inefficiency, vice, crime, and manifold other evils! The blame of this lies not so much on the Government as on the appetites of the drinkers who are content to allow the food of the people to be destroyed in order to gratify their appetites, and on the greed of those whose vested interests in the liquor traffic permit them to seek to make money out of the sufferings of their fellows.

A Terrible Illustration of Heartless Waste In Times of Food-Shortage.

We extract the following from *Joyful News* of January 24th, being a description of Christmas Day contained in a letter from an officer attached to a hospital at the Front:—

I went on duty in the morning but did very little, and left at 12 for a half-day's holiday. At 2-30 we (the staff) all met for dinner, and the food was fine. The noise was terrific. I have never heard anything like it, and as I looked out over the roaring, singing, laughing crowd I knew there would be trouble before the day was out. The C.O. came in to wish us all a Happy Christmas, and we cheered and sang "For he's a jolly good fellow." The official Chaplain hoped it would be the last Christmas out here, and then things began.

The first thing we had to cheer us up was the news that there was almost limitless beer and wine, and the articles themselves closely followed. The beer was brought round in big enamel jugs, and bottles of red and white wine were

given out wholesale. The din increased, if possible, and the beer and wine flowed on. *They* were so important that eatables were a minor incident and were hardly noticed. To cut a long story short, before dinner was over quite one-third of the men were more or less drunk—some absolutely so.

I helped to put two of these last to bed, and then, feeling utterly sick of the incessant din, I put on my overcoat and walked away up to the top of the hills at the back of the hospital, where the wind might clean my skin, and prayer my soul. It was too cold up there to stay long, so I came down through the village and spent some time in the absolute stillness of the R.C. Church.

Thus refreshed and strengthened, I came back here and spent the evening with the men in the ward. At about 9 p.m. I went to my tent to find only three men there, all the others being in the messroom where the remains of the beer and wine were being drunk.

Just after 11 they all streamed in, hardly any sober, and commenced a sing-song, which lasted nearly an hour. It was detestable to hear the swaying party sing in muddled manner such things as "O come let us adore Him," and "Abide with me," especially as some were swearing and blaspheming the while. At last all was quiet, and I slept till morning.

Do we Need a New Theology?

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be **ACCURSED**. . . . I testify unto every man that heareth the word of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall **ADD** unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall **TAKE AWAY** from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things that are written in this book. . . . He that sat upon the throne said: Behold I am making **ALL THINGS NEW**. . . . This word: "Yet once more" signifieth the removal of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. . . . Every scribe that is instructed unto the kingdom heaven is like unto a man that is a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things **NEW** and **OLD**.—(Gal. 1⁸; Rev. 22^{18, 19}; 21³; Heb. 12²⁷; Matt. 13⁵²).

My answer to the question that heads this article is: **NO** and **YES**. If the question means: Can there be any theology that can change what is plainly taught in Holy Scripture; I reply with the strongest emphasis: **NO NEVER**. But if the question means: Can there be any change in human interpretations of the teachings of Divine revelation, I reply with equal emphasis: **MOST EMPHATICALLY YES**.

I. My answer to the question in the first sense is that the teachings of Holy Scripture are **AUTHORITATIVE**, **COMPLETE**, and **FINAL**. They admit of no change and of no addition. I think the Church has been providentially guided in the arrangement of the books of Holy Scripture, and that the Apocalypse stands in its proper place at the end of the Canon, and I have no hesitation in quoting Rev. 22^{18, 19}

as applying to the whole Bible. The first and immediate application of this solemn warning was, of course, to the book in which it occurs. In this passage the Holy Ghost declares to us that these visions of Patmos are a complete panorama of the developments of the Kingdom of the Ascended Redeemer through all the ages of the world until the consummation of all things, and that, as such, they are incapable either of addition or subtraction. But they stand thus at the end of the Canon as an intimation to us that what is true of this book is true also of the whole inspired word. "All Scripture that is **GOD-BREATHED**," says Paul, "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be **PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED** unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3^{16, 17}). Our claim for Holy Scripture is that in it is revealed "**ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD**" (Col. 2⁹), and that it is impossible to change or to add to "**ALL THE FULNESS.**"

II. But human theologies, whenever they do not keep strictly to the express teachings of Scripture, whenever they subtract from those teachings or add to them, are, like all things human, fallible, and the human element in these theological interpretations of Scripture is, of course, subject to change and as human knowledge progresses necessarily shares that progress. We of the Wesley Bible Union are grossly misunderstood and misrepresented by our opponents when they say that we are obscurantist foes to all progress in theology. We hold most strongly that the Bible is itself a record of a steady and glorious advance in theology from the utterance of the Protevangelium in Eden until the full manifestation of the glory of God in the person of His Only Begotten Son. The Bible itself sets before us this age-long development of the plan of God. "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners hath at the end of those days spoken unto us in His Son Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds, Who is the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance." (Heb. 1¹⁻³).

Similarly, although God has in His Holy Scripture revealed to us the fact that the revelation is now complete and final, and that the Bible is capable of no appendix, yet just as He has left the created universe to the researches of

human science, so has He put the infinite revelation contained in Holy Scripture into the hands of His praying and studying Church, so that under the guidance of the Spirit Who inspired the word she may be led on in the ways of an ever progressive comprehension of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are "hid" in "the mystery of God and the Father and of Christ" (Col. 2^{2,3}).

The history of Christian doctrine is a record of the wonderful way in which through the ages God has been constantly leading His people on to a wider, clearer, deeper apprehension of the meaning of His Holy Word. Facts demonstrate two things: first, that since the Apostolic days no truth has at any time been discovered by the Church that is not contained in Holy Scripture: and second, the Bible has been the instrument by which the Church has been led to the discovery of all the new truth that has dawned upon her consciousness. The Church has had no appendix to her Bible, but she has been led on to a more perfect understanding of that book which the Holy Spirit declares to be complete and final.

As illustrations of the development of theology I would refer to the discussion of the doctrine of the Person of Christ through the early ages of the Church until it reached its sublime climax in that marvellous formulary of careful, and well-balanced language, and of profound penetrating thought, the Athanasian Creed, which, notwithstanding the ignorant abuse that has been heaped upon it, stands before the world as one of the most perfect manifestations of the power of the human intellect, and of the capabilities of human speech to give expressions to the deep things of God. Through tempests of error Athanasius and other champions of the truth of God led the Church on to a clearer apprehension of what the Bible teaches us concerning that unfathomable mystery of the union of the Godhead with human nature and the manifestation of "*all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*," in the person of Him who is "Perfect God and Perfect Man." This priceless document has been one of the lights of the Church ever since Athanasius won his triumph over the Arian heresy.

Another illustrative crisis-point in the history of Christian doctrine is that remarkable treatise of Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo?* (*Why Was God Made Man?*), which brought the

Church to a clearer apprehension of the doctrine of the Atonement and its relation to the whole fabric of theological truth, thus elucidating a doctrine, in which there are still left many "unexplored remainders," as Joseph Cook, of Boston, U.S.A. so aptly called the territories which still remain for investigation of the Christian student. I cannot refrain from saying here that much of the Modernist revolt against Evangelical theology has been produced by crude presentations of the doctrine of propitiation, and by misapprehensions as to what is the orthodox faith on this subject. Further, I am one of those who hold that the doctrine of the Atonement must necessarily always have for the finite intellect a large territory of "unexplored remainders," seeing that the doctrine of the Atonement involves the whole subject of the relations of man to God, and must contain many elements which are beyond the reach of all creature ken, seeing that in order to understand the relations between any two entities, we must know both the entities. In the matter of the Atonement a knowledge of the Infinite God is the only thing that can provide a perfect doctrine of the Atonement. However far the finite intellect may progress in its knowledge of God, there will still remain unmeasured expanses and unfathomed depths in God the Unsearchable Whom no one can fully know but He Himself, Whose face none can see and live. Though I believe that careful devout Christian research in regard to the Atonement may do much to clarify the Church's knowledge, yet in relation to such subjects we need always to remember the Holy Spirit's injunction:—"The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. 29²⁹). In the great mysteries of the faith the true Christian attitude is the childlike acceptance of God's revelation whether we understand it or not. The sin of sins is the human pride that makes human reason the measure of truth, thus setting man above God Himself. This is the consummation of all wickedness, and into this Satan strove to drag men from the beginning when he said to Eve: "Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil." Rationalism is *the* sin against the Holy Ghost.

The whole history of the Church is full of demonstrations that by careful study of Holy Scripture men will advance most rapidly in progressive knowledge of the

truth, and that the Bible is not a bar to progress but is the King's highway of Progress. This advance in knowledge of the truth may be seen in Luther's exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith, in the emancipation of Protestant theology from the Romish errors concerning authority in religion and the ascertainment of the infallible authority of Holy Scripture in which British Puritans played so conspicuous a part, and in the ascertainment of the truth of Scripture concerning slavery, and all kindred iniquities of traffic "in the bodies and souls of men" (Rev. 18¹³).

Probably up to date the most conspicuous example of theological progress since Apostolic times is to be seen in the Wesleyan Methodist theology, which, it is true, has added no article to the creed, but which, by an appeal to Scripture from the theories and philosophies of men, has lit up with an illumination never possessed before all the articles of the creed, and especially the doctrines of the Holy Ghost and of experimental religion. The wisdom of John Wesley is to be seen very strikingly in his selection of the Standards for our Church, Standards the glory of which is that they are not narrow formularies, but that they comprise within them the whole body of Divine truth as revealed in the Scriptures. *The Wesley Bible Union must resist with its whole strength any attempt to substitute for those spacious Standards any small selection of points such as some are suggesting with the express design of converting the Standards into an instrument that shall not exclude those who attribute error to the Scriptures and to our Lord Himself.*

The study of progress in theology shews up the mistake of those who decry controversy as mischievous. The folly of this doctrine is manifest for those who have any reverence for the Bible, seeing that the prophetic writings, the Epistles, and, above all, the discourses of our Lord Himself are so largely controversial. Church history demonstrates that all along the course of the ages controversy has been the Providential instrument which has constantly led the Church to the clearer apprehension of the truth. In this way God with the miraculous alchemy of His grace has made the errors of men to praise Him. The impact of error has opened the eyes of the Church to the contents of the revelation committed to her trust.

In every great world-crisis like the present God has shaken things that can be removed, in order that "those things which cannot be shaken may remain," and through these shattering earthquakes He has led His people to the discovery of truths undiscerned before.

For myself, I think I discern upon the horizon the gleams of a new day of glorious progress. Dr. Pope once said to me, "The great doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost which the Church has up to the present only dimly discerned." I think I see in the present emphasis on *the Immanence of God*, a movement in the realization of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, which is the final and complete revelation of Christianity, viz., that *every man is called to be the conscious temple of indwelling God*. This doctrine, that all men are called to be **"PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE"** (2 Pet. 1⁴), opens out the real basis of a universal brotherhood of humanity, that finds the most complete expression in those sublime words of our Lord's High Priestly prayer:—**THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE, THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US . . . I IN THEM AND THOU IN ME, THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE.**" (John 17^{21, 23}).

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Our thanks are presented to all our friends.

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Earthly Success not the Goal of Duty.

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to the light I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right—stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong.

—Abraham Lincoln.

* * * * *

The greatest triumph of the ages is a Crucifixion. The highest of all thrones is the Cross of Calvary. The Martyrs are earth's greatest conquerors. The Right always wins, although men may think it to be defeated.

The Certainties of Revelation

VERSUS

The Mirage of Mysticism.

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

As God is faithful, our word toward you is not **YEA AND NAY**. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not **YEA AND NAY**. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the **YEA**: wherefore also **THROUGH HIM** is the **AMEN** unto the glory of God through us. . . . Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto **ACCORDING TO THY WORD**. . . . Lord, to whom shall we go? **THOU HAST THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE**. . . . Lord, Thou knowest **ALL THINGS**. . . . Only be thou strong and very courageous that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest. The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to **ALL** that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success. . . . His delight is in the law of Jehovah; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree transplanted—(*this is the Hebrew*)—by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither: and whatsoever he doeth shall produce prosperity—(*this is the Hebrew*).—(2 Cor. i 18-20; Ps. 119⁹; John 6⁶⁸, 21¹⁷; Josh. i 7, 8; Ps. i 2, 3).

Some Modernists are fond of affirming that the real splendour of the Scriptures never appeared to them until they were emancipated from the antiquated doctrine of its infallible authority; and that they never knew the preciousness of Christ until they discovered His fallibility, and came to know that many of His teachings are error, being uttered from the standpoint of the "fantastic notions of an unscientific age." They appeal to their experience as demonstrating the truth of the Modernist doctrines which they hold. They say "these doctrines have grown upon them as they have made progress in the spiritual life." In these doctrines they profess to have found a growing rest of soul as they have advanced in them. Indeed, some of them go as far as to say: "I feel so sure of the truth of these teachings that I would affirm that to deny this truth is equivalent to asserting that Christ has been misleading me, so sure am I that I have been living under the guidance of Christ."

My reply to such assertions is that when men set up their own experience as the touchstone of truth they are doing two things. (1). When individual experience is set up as the only authoritative standard of truth the Church's message is reduced to chaos, since the Church can only say to men:

"We present to you a series of tentative suggestions, the truth or error of which you must decide by your own experience." Theology under these conditions is necessarily reduced to an anarchic jumble of individual opinion. It is equivalent to declaring that there is no authoritative revelation for mankind. (2). Men are always in great peril of imagining that the affirmations of their own minds are Divine oracles.

One form of the doctrine which I am here discussing is frequently expressed thus : "Only that is true for any individual in the Bible which authenticates itself to his consciousness." As Dr. Lea, the learned Vicar of St. Austell, has well said : "This doctrine sends me to a sinner's heart to ascertain the will of God." There was a time when it authenticated itself to the consciousness of Saul of Tarsus that it was a religious duty for him to give his assent to the stoning of Stephen. The history of human error is full of illustrations of the way in which men like Mohammed succeed in persuading themselves that the voice of God within them has commanded them to be guilty of the greatest abominations of iniquity. There is no more mischievous form of the central error of Antichrist than the tendency of the present time to make experience the ultimate authority in religion. From the beginning it has been the constant aim of Satan to seduce men into making their own knowledge the basis of religion. This shews us how profound is the insight into the very depths of the origin of evil in the Genesis record of the Fall. That record tells us that it was through the *Tree of Knowledge* that man fell away from God. From that time all through the ages the Arch-Deceiver has steadily kept to this as his supreme aim, to induce man to vault into the throne of God, and to attribute Divine authority to his own inventions and imaginations. Thus the dupes of Satan fall into the awful condemnation spoken of by Paul in 2 Thess. 2 : "Then shall be revealed that Lawless One whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth : even he whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness, for them that are perishing, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error that they should believe a lie : that they all might be judged who believed not the truth,

but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Thus Paul describes the personality of the Lawless One who, he declares, will work such terrible mischiefs amongst men. He says that the day of the Lord will not arrive until "the falling away come first, and the Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God." Human history is marked all along its course by various manifestations of this spirit of Antichrist, men assuming the attributes of God, claiming the authority of God, and in some cases proclaiming themselves to be incarnations of the Divine. In Apostolic times the apotheosis of the Roman Emperors was a glaring manifestation of man's attempt to set himself forth as God. In 1870, with the declaration of the Papal Infallibility, Romanism reached the climax of Antichristian error. Now in Modernism, by its doctrine that to each man is committed the capacity of the infallible decision as to what is truth, Antichrist attains its last imaginable consummation of the deification of man by making each man God unto himself.

This I call the ultimate mirage of mysticism. John Wesley was continually warning his people against the perils of mysticism. In most pathetic language he describes how he himself was all but ruined by the snares of the Mystics in the new Standard Edition of Wesley's Journal, vol. i. p. 420, where he tells us that he was carried away for a time by their "noble descriptions of union with God and internal religion," but that ultimately the effect of their teachings was to make good works appear "mean, flat, and insipid"; that they gave him "a plenary dispensation from all the commands of God"; and he pronounced this severe estimate of their dangerous heresies: "*All the other enemies of Christianity are triflers; the Mystics are the most dangerous of its enemies.*" Concerning Joseph Behmen, who captivated many minds in the eighteenth century, he says of his Exposition of Genesis that the part of it which he read he found to be "most sublime nonsense, immutable bombast, fustian not to be paralleled" (Journal, vol. iii. p. 17). In his Journal, vol. iii. p. 10, he describes Mysticism as "a specious snare of the devil." In a letter to William Law (Works, vol. ix. pp. 466-509) he exposes some of the absurdities of Mystical mirage, shewing how the speculations of the Mystics lead to the utter destruc-

tion of much of the plain teaching of the Bible, and especially how their doctrines destroy the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement. One of the errors for which he reproves Law is one that is constantly found in Modernist teachings, nay, which is necessarily involved in the doctrine which supersedes the Bible by the authority of Experience. He complains that Law taught his readers to go "from the teaching of the Bible to be taught by Christ." "So," says Mr. Wesley, "you set Christ and the Bible in flat opposition to each other. Is this the way we are to learn of Him? Nay, but we are taught of Him, not by going from the Bible, but by keeping close to it. Both by the Bible and by experience we know that His word and His Spirit act in connection with each other." Summarizing what he conceives to be the chief errors of the Mystics in a letter to his brother Samuel, written in 1736, he says, referring to their attitude to the Bible (Works, vol. xii. p. 28): "Scripture they need not read; for it is only His letter with Whom they converse face-to-face. And if they do read it now and then, as for expounders, living or dead, reason or philosophy, (which only puffs up and vainly tries to bind God by logical definitions and divisions); as for knowledge of tongues or ancient customs, they need none of them, any more than the Apostles did, for they have the same Spirit." Concerning Madame Guyon's attitude to the Scripture he says (Works, vol. xii. p. 277):

"The grand secret of all her mistakes was this, the not being guided by the written word. She did not take the Scripture for the rule of her actions; at most it was but the secondary rule. Inward impressions, which she called inspirations, were her primary rule. The written word was not a lantern to her feet, a light in all her paths. No, she followed another light, the outward light of her confessors, and the inward light of her own spirit. It is true, she wrote many volumes upon the Scriptures. But she then read them not to learn but to teach; and therein was hurried on by the rapid stream of her overflowing imagination."

I think I understand what the Modernist Mystics mean when they tell us that their view of the Scriptures has brought them such peace. Their peace is the smug comfortable self-satisfaction of the egoist who finds delight in feeling himself superior to the Bible and to the teachings of the Church of God from the beginning. The peace of the Mystic egoist who feels that he has at last found solid rock in the affirmations of his own consciousness is a very different thing from "the peace of God which passeth all understanding, which

alone can guard our hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4⁷). A self-centred life is founded upon that which is less than nothing and vanity. Only the life that is God-centred has a real and abiding foundation. That life is based upon the Rock of Ages Who is not to be discovered by looking into self but by looking out of self unto Jesus, Who is revealed in the Scriptures, and Who Himself bade us to "search the Scriptures" in order that we may know Him. If the Scriptures are discredited we have lost our Redeemer, the Church has no message to deliver, and we are left without chart or compass, and without light, to be tossed to and fro in the darkness upon the restless sea of human speculation, orphan children crying in the darkness for a light that can never come.

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

No. XXVI.

THE FALL OF MAN AS VIEWED IN ROMANS V.

BY REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

In Rom. 5¹²⁻²¹ St. Paul lays down fundamental statements concerning the Fall and its effects and consequences, from which much modern teaching has lamentably departed. He there presents a graphic picture of the parallel and the contrast between the Fall of Adam and the redeeming Work of Christ. The leading idea of this whole section is a comparison of the train of consequences flowing from the Fall of Adam with the train of consequences flowing from the redeeming work of Christ.

I.—THE HISTORICAL FACT. It needs to be noted first that throughout his entire argument St. Paul treats the Fall of Adam as a real event, as much so as the Redemption of Christ. It is clearly based upon the narrative of the Fall in Gen. 3, which he regards as historical: as an inspired account of the origin of sin in the human race; not a collection of early myths or traditions, nor an allegorical method of teaching the moral history of sin in man, as much modern teaching represents it to be; but an historical narrative of facts. It is inconceivable that the great Apostle should believe that to be a collection of myths upon which he grounds such profoundly important doctrine as this. In other parts of his writings he speaks of the circumstances of the Fall as described in Gen. 3 in a way that can only be explained by the supposition that he accepted them as historical events (Rom. 16²⁰; 2 Cor. 11³; 1 Tim. 2¹³⁻¹⁴). The simple facts themselves are seldom alluded to in either the Old Testament or the New. They are everywhere taken for granted; but such definite references as we have always assume their historical reality.

II.—ITS TRANSMITTED EFFECTS. His chief aim here is to show that the effects of Adam's Fall were transmitted to all his descendants.

He nowhere states *how* they were transmitted, nor does he define in precise terms *what* is transmitted; but he emphasises two things that passed upon all men: death as the punishment of sin, and the entail of a depraved sinful nature. The expression "All have sinned" (v. 12) has been taken by some to mean that "all sinned implicitly in the sin of Adam, his sin involving theirs"; and by others to mean that "all sinned in their own person, and of their own will." But as the apostle's argument requires the connection between Adam and his posterity, the full meaning of the words seems to be that while all have sinned their sin was due in part to tendencies inherited from Adam. All through this passage there is an under-current indicating that there was something else at work besides the act and guilt of individuals; and that "something" is the transmitted effect of Adam's Fall. It brought a universal predisposition towards sin, and inseparably linked together sin and death. In vv. 13 and 14 he shows that those who lived between Adam and Moses had not the same degree of guilt as either Adam or those who came after. For, although sin was in the world, sin is not reckoned or imputed where there is no law; and they had no such definite law as was given to Adam, and the law of Moses was not yet given. But he does not say that they were entirely free from personal guilt or responsibility; for he had already declared in Rom. 2¹²⁻¹⁶ that even those who are without a written law have a law in their own heart by which they will be judged. Much more will those who have both the Law and the Gospel be held accountable for their conduct. But although before the law the full degree of guilt was not imputed he shows, in v. 14, that death, the penalty of sin, reigned all the same during that period. He assigns the prevalence of death as a proof of the mischief wrought by Adam's Fall; only the Fall could account for it. Sin and death had their beginning together, and they continued side by side. In all this the special point insisted upon is that before the coming of the law the condition of mankind was directly traceable to Adam's Fall. The effect of the first sin passed upon those who were not guilty of his transgression, and even upon those who did not personally offend as he did. In Rom. 5¹ he implies that, apart from Christ, all are under condemnation.

III.—THE MEANING OF DEATH. Some have understood death to mean only "physical death," on the ground that this is the sense of the word in v. 14; and in Gen. 2¹⁷; 3¹⁹ to which the apostle is evidently alluding. Others have understood it to include "spiritual death" as well as physical. While others again have understood it to denote "eternal death," chiefly on the ground of vv. 17, 21 where it seems to be opposed to "eternal life." The most correct view seems to be to take it as including all three. The original sentence may refer chiefly to physical death, but spiritual and eternal death cannot be excluded, as this great argument of the apostle shows. In I Cor. 15 the connection between the doom of death and the sin of Adam is stated in almost the same terms as here. The reference there seems more limited to physical death, but careful examination will show that there also the word has the same deeper and wider meaning. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God, and this at once took place. Physical death also took immediate effect in the sense of mortality, including the innumerable ills that accompany it, and issuing in the separation of soul and body. Eternal death is the ultimate penalty of sin, viewing the penalty in itself and apart

from the provision of redemption. Dr. Pope says that in the sentence pronounced upon sin death was not at the beginning declared to be eternal, because the entrance of mercy might reverse that part of the decree; but it was all along intimated that this must be the natural result and consequence of impenitent sin. Eternal death as the consequence of sin was not definitely announced until Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1¹⁰). Eternal death is not spoken of as threatened punishment, but as the inevitable consequence of unpardoned sin; and it is not so much declared to be the penalty of guilt as the penalty of redemption rejected. To them that perish the rejected gospel is the "savour of death unto death" (1 Cor. 1¹⁸; 2 Cor. 2¹⁵⁻¹⁶); spiritual death deepening into eternal death. In the Scripture the expression "eternal life" is never used to denote mere continuance in being. It is union and communion with God. The consummation of this is "life indeed," and the opposite of this is death (Rom. 5²¹; 6²³).

IV.—TRANSMITTED DEPRAVITY. The effect of Adam's fall which consists in a transmitted moral depravation or corruption: the inheritance of a bias to evil, is not so expressly treated in this particular passage as in some other parts of St. Paul's writings. But it is abundantly dwelt upon throughout the whole of Scripture which is everywhere pervaded by it, both in the Old Testament and the New. The Old Testament takes it for granted that the root and spring of individual personal life is sinful; and it multiplies testimonies both to the universality of the sinful taint, and to the propagation of it in the race (Gen. 5³, 6³, 8²¹; Job 14⁴, 15¹⁴; Psa. 51⁵, etc.). Throughout the New Testament the same truth is confirmed and intensified (Matt. 15¹⁹; John 3⁶). On this topic St. Paul elsewhere emphatically dwells. He uses our Lord's expression "flesh" in this connection more than any other writer; and in such a variety of ways as to establish the propagation of a corrupted nature (Rom. 7^{17, 18, 23}, 8^{2, 7}; Eph. 2³). Here in Rom. 5, in five varied forms of the same assertion he declares that in whatever sense the redemption was an act external to the race, and for its benefit; the Fall was external to the successive generations of mankind, and for their condemnation. Later Jewish writings, after the close of the Old Testament canon, contain numerous statements as to the connection between Adam's fall and the introduction of death and the bias to evil. And along with this there are explicit assertions of personal responsibility on the part of all who sin, with the insistence upon free will and individual accountability. St. Paul carries such teaching to a higher level, and completes it by connecting it with the redeeming work of Christ, and showing how the effects of Adam's fall may be removed and cancelled by the superabounding grace and life in Jesus Christ. He makes it clear that while man inherits a sinful nature he cannot shift responsibility from himself; but that there is something within him by virtue of which he is free to choose, and that according to his choice he must be judged.

On the things here touched upon there have arisen, in the course of the centuries, many serious errors and departures from Scripture which, in more or less modified forms, are being revived in much modern teaching. Space does not permit detailed reference to it. What is here attempted is the more important effort to summarise the testimony of the Divine Word itself.

Was Moses a Lawgiver?

REV. SHERWIN SMITH, M.A., B.D.

Was Moses the main author of the Pentateuch—of the Five Books of Moses? He was. This does not mean, of course, that he wrote the account of his own death, or that he necessarily wrote the Book of Deuteronomy at all. There are signs that this Book was finally put into its present form on the Western side of Jordan, and Joshua, or some other, who was present on that day, was just as capable of recording Moses' last words, as John, the beloved disciple, was of recording our Lord's, years after they were spoken. It means that we owe to Moses the Ten Commandments, the Sinaitic legislation, the building of the ark, and the Priestly code, and the last words of Moses.

One proof is quite sufficient for me, and that is the Levites, the Tribe of the Levites. Strangely enough, this is one of the strong points in the Higher Critical position. They say that there are so many contradictions about the Levites, that it is impossible for one man to be the author of them all. In the Priestly code a very sharp distinction is made between the priests and the Levites, between the sons of Aaron and the rest of the tribe; and very definite rules are laid down for the tithes due to the priests and the Levites. But in Deuteronomy they are massed together and called "the priests the Levites," and they are regarded as dependent upon the free-will offerings of the people, just as the poor and the strangers are. But there is no real contradiction here, especially when you remember that there is forty years' interval between the one and the other. In Leviticus, Moses tries to establish the permanent distinction between the priests and the Levites, and lays down the liturgical rules for the worship of God's people. But after forty years' experience of the people, he found out what he indeed already knew, and what everybody knows, that the ministers of God are finally dependent upon the free-will offerings of God's people, and no amount of rules or legislation can obviate that. There is even a tendency in Methodism to depend more upon assessments by Quarter Boards than upon free-will offerings, and Methodism had better remember the charge of Moses—

how he finally commended his tribe to the love of the people.

Again, it is said that throughout the Bible there is a strife between the prophetic and the priestly ministry, that the priestly ministry is that which is finally established in Israel in Ezra's time, that they therefore came last and "doctored" the records in their own interests. I have no brief for priests, but I think this a dreadful libel upon men who kept alive the worship of Almighty God for centuries, and who if their system had been founded upon a recent lie would soon have toppled to the ground. But it is not true. The prophets themselves prove it. The very nature of prophets is to protest against an established system. They are free lances amid regular troops. They are an escape valve for a crushed soul. They protested against the undue weight of this very priestly system, which, so the Higher Critics say, did not come into being till the prophets were dead. Isaiah, one of the earliest and greatest, said, "Your burnt offerings and your sacrifices I cannot away with, and your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a weariness to me, I cannot bear them." There is a prophetic saying also, "Like priest, like people." The prophets protested against an overdose of religion without morality. But the true worship of Almighty God, as established by Moses, they loved, and Isaiah had his great vision in the Temple, and he was purged with a live coal from off the altar of sacrifice. The fact is that, though the prophetic and priestly ministries seem often antipathetic one to the other, just as the Anglican and the Nonconformists are, or the Roman and the Reformed, yet there are souls and times in the Bible, as, please God, there may yet be in the Christian Church, when these two are one. The prophetic and the priestly combine in Moses, they combine in David, they combine in St. Paul, and our Lord was Prophet, Priest, and King. The strife, then, is an argument rather for the age-long persistence of priestly forms of worship than for their recent establishment.

But always in this matter there are the Levites themselves. A French King once asked his chaplain for a certain proof of Christianity in a single sentence, and the chaplain replied, "Sire, the Jews." The existence of the Jews to-day and all they stand for and have gone through is a proof of the Christian religion. If I were asked for a proof of the existence of Moses in a sentence, I should reply, "The

Levites." The actual fact of the Levites is a wonderful tribute to Moses. They were not of a late creation. They do not date from Ezra the Scribe, or the prophecies of Ezekiel. The one certain fact is that from the entrance into the Promised Land unto this day, the tribe of Levi had no part or inheritance in it. They were a landless people. What made so fierce a tribe as Levi forego all possessions in the land of their people? What but the meekness of Moses and the high office to which God through him called them? It was an incredible position for any set of families to be placed in at the very beginning of things, and it remains a clear proof of the religious movement under Moses.

There are many other proofs, of course. It is thought that the regulations for the building of the Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant are far too detailed for the beginnings of things. But ritual always must be detailed. Even backward peoples take extraordinary care in the conduct of their worship, and Moses was no Ishmael, no untutored savage; he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. But the *pastoral* character of the legislation, the very Tabernacle itself, evidence of the worship of a wandering people, the great Day of Atonement, which is embedded in the priestly legislation and yet is redolent of that wilderness into which the High Priest sent the scapegoat, the references to the camp and going "without the camp," all speak of wilderness legislation. When in Deuteronomy Moses prefigures the circumstances of their life in Palestine and legislates ahead for it, it is thought that he shows a premonition more than human. Probably he does, seeing he spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. But he was a fit vessel for the Holy Spirit. He had lived in the centre of civilisation in Egypt, he had also lived in the heart of the desert, he was a man of vast experience. He knew that the Tabernacle must some day give place to a fixed Temple, that such a people as he had led for forty years would some day want a king like other peoples, that for their hardness of heart he must allow legislation which contradicted earlier teaching, and in Deuteronomy he takes leave of the world and his people like a real Moses.

There are plenty of indications of his influence and the influence of his Five Books before you come to Ezra. It is in Joshua and Judges and the story of Eli and the prayer of

Solomon and the life-history of Hezekiah and the prophets ; and in order to prove that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, a good deal of work with the scissors has to be done, cutting out here, there, and everywhere. In fact you may say if Moses is a fraud, most of the Old Testament is ; and if the Book of Deuteronomy is a fraud, religion itself is.

Our Lord does not hesitate to ascribe the books to Moses, and He has many references to him. It is said that there are difficulties in the Books of Moses ; as the Rev. George Jackson puts it in *Studies in the Old Testament* (p. 39), "It is not the critic who has created the facts which cry out against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch ; they are there for all men to see and judge by ; what he does is to give heed to them and to interpret them as best he can." Well, if they were there for all men to see and judge by, they were there for our Lord to see and judge by. If those facts cry out against the Mosaic authorship, hadn't He ears to hear that cry ? Why should we think the Higher Critics give more heed to the Scriptures than our Lord Jesus Christ ? He said : "Did not Moses give you the law ?" "If ye believe Moses, ye would believe Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words ?" Those sayings are become true. They do not believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. They do not believe therefore the words of Jesus.

Notes.

What is Modernism ?

Modernism is a convenient term which, though difficult to define, is used to denote a pretty well-understood tendency of thought concerning religious questions, the general characteristic of which is that it is definitely rationalistic in its tone and principles. The name has been adopted not with any idea of fixing any opprobrium upon those who hold the doctrines of the school, but the term is really the creation of the votaries of the school, because the word "modern" is constantly on their lips, and it is not too much to say that their own chosen watchwords are the phrases "modern thought" and "modern light." If we were asked what these terms mean we should be obliged to reply something like this : "Modern Light" is an undefined, and undefinable somewhat to which modernists constantly appeal as the touchstone of truth, and their continual demand is that there must be a complete revolution of all our theological systems in order to meet the requirements of what they denote by their chosen term. We have said above that Modernism is difficult to define. We must now go further and say that it is really impossible to define it with precision. "Modern

thought" is in a condition of perpetual flux. Consequently it follows that Modernism itself must always be in the same condition, and, though it proposes to test all truth by the thing which it calls "Modern Light," that thing is itself intangible and impalpable, and it is difficult to see how we can test anything by a touchstone that, like the Frenchman's definition of a flea, is *that which, when you put your finger upon it, isn't there.*

The Rationalism Wisp in the Modernist's Nebula.

If it is possible to speak of any basis for "Modern Light" as the Modernist conceives it, we may say that Rationalism is that basis, or rather we may say, the pivot on which the whirling nebula revolves,—a pivot, if "pivot" it can be called, that is itself *gaseous* nebula. As is shewn in an article by Mr. Bennetts in another column of this number of our *Journal*, the central germ of the Modernist apostasy is the desire to enthrone man above all other authority. We are inclined to accept Philip Mauro's translation of Rev. xiii. 18, "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of man: and his number is 666." Our readers may recollect Mr. Bennetts's exposition of the probable meaning of this number, viz.: Seven is the Biblical number for perfect. 666 . . . represents man struggling after the attainment of a perfection that shall make him supreme, striving to get to 7, but never able to get beyond 666 . . . in recurring decimal. Though sixes should be added to all eternity, the perfection of 7 is still unattained and unattainable. This aim to reach Satan's proposal to Eve to be "**AS GOD KNOWING**" (Gen. 3^d), and to attain to the throne of God has been the chief endeavour of the spirit of Antichrist, and as Mr. Bennetts shews in his article on "The Certainties of Revelation *versus* the Mirage of Mysticism," this is the climax fulfilment of Paul's prophecy in 2 Thess. 2. We would not be understood as depreciating the proper royal functions of Human Reason. God's Revelation always appeals to it. The voice of Scripture everywhere cries to us "*Come let us reason together.*" Faith means not the acceptance of truth against Reason or without Reason. *Faith is the acceptance of truth that lies beyond the ken of Reason upon the basis of a Revelation, the credentials of whose authority commend itself to the acceptance of the Reason.* The process is this: in Reason's search for fundamental truth she arrives at last on the strand of that shore where the boundary line stands that separates the Finite from the Infinite. When Reason stands there on the shore of the ocean of Infinity, she has no instruments with which to fathom its depths, or to measure its immensities. If Reason is to learn anything about Infinity, it can only be learnt through Revelation. All that Reason ought to ask is sufficient credentials of the authority of Revelation, and then she should rejoice in adoring thanksgiving to sing:

Almighty God, to Thee
Be endless honours done,
The Undivided Three
And the Mysterious One;
Where Reason fails with all her powers,
There Faith prevails, and Love adores.

The Metaphysics Wisp of the Modernist's Nebula.

All through the ages man's philosophy has been one of the greatest sources of man's delusions. If men had heeded the Bible, they would have escaped the snares of that wisdom of man which is "foolishness with God" (I Cor. 3¹⁹). Paul warned the Colossians against those who would "make prey of them through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the baby-talk of the world" (Col. 2⁸). We have here given an

accurate rendering of Paul's Greek). It is amazing, after the Bible-warnings against the follies and dangers of men's philosophical speculations, that professed Christian theologians should set such store as the Modernists do by philosophical studies, and that, after the unutterable follies with which the history of philosophy teems, they should seem to regard philosophy as the guiding-star of the student, and should write as if the philosophers are to dictate to the church how much of the Bible she may be permitted to regard as truth. Dr. Parker used to say that a great deal of metaphysics might be regarded as an attempt on the part of man to objectivize himself, to get outside of himself, in order that he may inspect himself, and anatomize himself. On one occasion when we heard him, satirizing metaphysicians of this type, say with characteristic penetration: "*When a man tries to get outside of himself, he tears himself in pieces in the process.*" We would not be understood as disparaging a truly sound and rational metaphysics, a metaphysics that does not attempt the impossible, and recognizes those limitations of creature-thought of which we spoke in the preceding note. Such metaphysics are not only useful but essential as the basis of all scientific systematization of truth. The metaphysics that is soundly rational recognizes the impossibility of knowing the Infinite except through Revelation, and knows that Faith is the only instrument by which victory can be won in the region of the relations between the Finite and the Infinite; that in this sphere "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen" (Heb. II¹).

The Anti-supernatural Wisp in the Modernist's Nebula.

Dislike of the supernatural is one of the ruling principles of Modernism. Many of its advocates openly declare that miracle is impossible. With most of them, accounts of miracle are a reason for doubting the truth of all narratives that contain it, or, at all events, they all shew a strong desire to eliminate the element of the supernatural from theology.

The Evolution Wisp in the Modernist's Nebula.

We have so often dwelt on this in these columns that this is a subject on which we need not enlarge. One of the saddest instances of folly in all the records of human error is the lightning-like rapidity of the recrudescence of this ancient Pagan error of Evolution, in spite of the fact that the fossils demonstrate that the missing links between species and species, which are essential to the maintenance of the theory, are the very things that have not been. Like all errors, Evolutionism has in it elements of truth which are sustained by the Revelation of Genesis i., as Mr. Gath Whitley shews in his article in this number of the *Journal*, viz., that God in His works proceeds on the principle of a steady ascent from the lower to the higher: but the Evolutionism that destroys the Bible doctrine of human nature and denies the Fall of Man finds no support in the realm of Fact.

The Guess-Criticism Wisp in the Modernist's Nebula.

By the Guess-Criticism we denote what is called by Modernists the Higher Criticism (a name which, if not so originally intended, does mislead the unwary by giving the impression that it is Criticism of a superior type). This Criticism is, in the main, based upon the nebulous hypotheses invented by the Critics, hypotheses which have only a film of the most slender foundation in the realm of facts. The facts which are quoted in support of the guesses of the so-called Higher Criticism do not really sustain it, except upon the foundation of the assumption *a priori* that the theory is correct. The facts do not produce the theories, but are collected and interpreted by the theorizers to support their theories.

The Mammonist Wisp in the Modernist's Nebula.

Much of the Modernist attack upon the Scriptures proceeds from a desire of that carnal mind which is enmity against God to shake off those teachings of the Bible that command its disciples to separate themselves from the world. They proceed from the desire of worldlings in the church to discredit the teachings of Holy Scripture, in order that by lax doctrine they may increase the number and worldly influence of the church membership, substituting the magnitude of a Mammonist church for the power of a church separate from the world endowed with the might of the Holy Ghost. Multitudes are glad to find a way of escaping the restraints of Bible Ethics. The ethical elements of Modernism are sadly manifested in the too prevalent trifling with doctrinal pledges.

The Anti-Eternal-Punishment Wisp in the Modernist's Nebula.

One of the most influential motives in producing the Modernist Nebula has doubtless been the desire to find such a doctrine of inspiration as will enable its holders to abandon the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. All critics are driven to the conclusion that it is unmistakable that the Bible teaches the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. The consequence of this is that those who want to deny this doctrine are eager to discredit the Scriptures, in order to bring in a doctrine which by its loose teachings respecting the future life makes way for the laxities of worldly conformity, and, generally, for the easy-going ethics that loosen the bonds of discipline.

The Modernist Nebula really a Will-o'-the-Wisp.

We think we have justified what we said at the beginning concerning the intangibility of the basis of Modernism, which by its Nebulosity pulverizes the Christian creed and reduces the Christian doctrine to chaos. Carlyle unwittingly exposed the mischievousness of the Clothes doctrine of religion which he was promulgating in his *Sartor Resartus (the Tailor Retailored)*, in which he represents all religious doctrines as a ceaselessly changing suit of clothes, which clothe an indefinable something called Religion, a something which must always change as the manners, customs, and ideas of men change, and so as he said—(we believe the saying is in one of his letters)—referring to the Christian religion: “*The old Jews' clothes are worn out now.*” The exposure of the folly and mischief of his doctrine to which we refer is to be seen in the fact that he tells his readers that the Professor of this Clothes Doctrine of Religions was *Professor Teufelsdröckh (Professor Devil's-Imp)* of the *University of Weissnichtwo (University of Know-not-where)*. He was right. A religion that is not based on an unchangeable Revelation is a Will-o'-the-Wisp which leads its dupes into the quagmires of the land of *Nowhere*.

The True Modern Light.

Some one may ask: “Is there no Modern Light in which to rejoice?” We reply with eager alacrity: “Oh yes, much, and much that is of great value in the progress of theology.” One of the reasons why we so deeply regret the Nebulous Modernism is that it is a great obstacle to the illumination of Gospel truth which ought to come through the wonderful discoveries of modern learning. The Modernist apostasy by its misuse of modern learning is preventing its true purpose in the Providence of God from being accomplished. Let us illustrate in a few particulars what we mean by the light which the progress of modern science throws upon the Bible and its teachings. Take the Bible-record of the Creation. How its sublimity is increased by the ascertained facts of Geology! What a demonstration of its inspiration is supplied by its supernatural anticipation of many dis-

coveries of modern science, as, for example, the order of creation! Take again the illumination thrown upon such Scriptures as the 19th Psalm or Isaiah 40 by the discoveries of modern astronomy. What new conceptions do the revelation of the millions of suns that people the expanses of space give us of the majesty and wisdom of Him by Whom they were made and in Whom they consist! What new light is thrown upon the meaning of many Scriptures by the advance that is being made in the philological knowledge of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek of the Bible! What advances are we making in a more intelligent and careful exegesis of the sacred text! How thankful we ought to be that real Modern Light is leading us away from the scissors-and-clip method of quoting Scripture, which Shakespeare with the marvellous penetration of his intellect so aptly designated as "the odd old ends" method! No intelligent person will be able much longer to tear scraps out of the Bible, such as the utterances of wicked men or words spoken by Satan, and quote them as the word of God, because they are in the Bible. The whole book *taken in block* is the word of God, but that word is not the fragmentary utterance torn away from the context but in case of erroneous utterances, such as the blasphemies of Rabshakeh for instance, the Divine message is the exposure of the falsehood of the utterances of Satan or of evil or mistaken men contained in the whole passage of which they form a part. Fancy any man taking these words of the devil and preaching from them as the word of God: "Skin for skin, yea all that man hath will he give for his life" (Job 2⁴)! Yet in the past men have taken "odd old ends" torn out of Holy Writ and preached from them as the word of God, when they have really been false or mistaken utterances, as, for instance, the mistaken utterances Job's friends or of Job himself. Modern light is leading us on into a much surer and more intellectual use of the word of God and to the understanding of the truth that every particular Scripture must be interpreted according to the context and according to the whole fabric of that Scripture which "*cannot be broken*" (John 10³⁵).

The Brute-Ethics of the Apehood-Theology.

The Apehood-Theology what is that? The Theology that substitutes the Evolutionist doctrine of man—**MAN WHICH WAS THE SON OF AN APE**,—for the Bible doctrine of man as expressed in the genealogy of Luke—"ADAM WHICH WAS THE SON OF GOD" (Luke 3³⁸): the theology that repudiates the Bible doctrine that man has fallen from the image of God and is capable of restoration to that image, and substitutes for it the doctrine that man is no more than a progressive animal. This Apehood-Theology repudiates the doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin, declares that what the Bible calls the Fall was really the ascent of man into the realm of moral consciousness, a progressive ascent which by natural forces is steadily marching on towards the production of the **SUPERMAN**. This classification of man amongst the animals is producing a system of ethics in which the animal elements of manhood are magnified at the expense of the moral and spiritual elements. Its full ripe fruit is seen in Nietzsche's portrait of the Superman, who reaches the climax of perfection when he succeeds in stripping himself of sympathy. The agitation for easy divorce, modern approaches to the abominations of free-love, proposals for the systematic breeding of man-animals so as to provide a vigorous soldiery for the struggles of a world dominated by the doctrine of **WILL TO POWER** as the Golden Rule of the age of the **SUPERMAN**, the dominance of the perverted appetite for alcoholic beverages with the horrible moral and physical results of their use, and many other things akin to these; constitute what we have styled the Brute-Ethics of the Apehood-Theology.

The Devil's Chain.

The time is opportune for calling attention to that powerful book of Edward Jenkins: "*The Devil's Chain*," which was published in 1876. A new cheap edition of that book would be of great value just now. In a form that appeals powerfully to the imagination, that gifted writer, a nephew of our own sainted Dr. Ebenezer Jenkins, sets forth the terrible character of the Drink curse in our midst, as it twists its living victims one by one into a great chain of life and death.

Demon.—Scour the homes and haunts of men,
Throngèd city and dotted plain,
Over the mountain down the glen,
Scour the land, and scour the main,
And gather links for the Devil's Chain.

Chorus.—Drink, drink!
Drain, drain!
Another link
For the Devil's Chain.

Demon.—For the Devil a wondrous chain shall wear
Of twisted bodies strong and fair,
Arm to leg and leg to arm,
Linked together, quick and warm,
Of bad and good, of high and low;
A chain for His Majesty down below.

.

Labour and sorrow, trust and truth,
Vigour and weakness, age and youth,
Beauty and ugliness, wealth and worth,
All the best and worst of earth,
Poison it, ruin it, kill it with drink,
And bring it to me for another link.

.

Jolly eve, ghastly morrow,
Sorrows drowned to bring new sorrow,
Bars thronged—prisons crammed,
Racy chorus—shriek of damned.

The Book of Genesis in the Light of Modern Discovery.

REV. D. GATH WHITLEY.

When Mr. Canning, who was the Prime Minister of England, was reproached in the House of Commons for recognising the South American Republics, he replied, "We are calling a new world into existence to redress the balance in the old." The same may now be said of the discoveries which are taking place amidst the ancient monuments. The pick and shovel of the Archæologist are bringing to light a new world from the mounds of Babylonia, the graves of Egypt, the ruins of Crete, the earth-heaps of Palestine, and

the buried cities of the Hittites, and the result of these investigations is to throw a flood of light on the ancient history of the East, and to powerfully confirm the truth of the written Word of God.

The Book of Genesis has for a long time been the great battle field between the assailants and the defenders of the Bible, and the points of attack have constantly shifted as time has gone on.

First of all, it was objected that the narratives in Genesis received no confirmation from ancient records : this objection is no longer heard. Next, it was maintained that Geology contradicted the Biblical account of Creation ; but it is now admitted that Genesis and Geology are in complete harmony. Then it was urged that at the origin of the Hebrew nation writing could not have existed, and consequently the history could not have been written until later times, and therefore the events were "unhistorical." This difficulty has been completely annihilated. The discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets has proved that writing existed in Palestine before the time of Moses. The written code of the Babylonian King Hammurabi was written 500 years before the Exodus, and we now know that an elaborate postal system existed in Babylon long before the time of Abraham.

Further, it was declared that the early Bible narratives were mythical ; but this theory has been generally abandoned, since it has been discovered that the sciences of Archæology and Physical Geography powerfully support the Book of Genesis. We are now witnessing the collapse of the theory that the narratives in the first part of the Book of Genesis were borrowed from Babylon. So steadily is the stream of opinion now running the other way, that such talented archæologists as Professors Clay, Barton, Kyle, and Rodgers, maintain that instead of Israel being indebted to Babylon, it was Babylon that was indebted to Israel's ancestors for its first religious notions. This is indeed a remarkable change of opinion.

Concerning the harmony or the first chapter of Genesis and Geology, the battle is won. The writings of such talented geologists as Professors Wright, Miller, Dana, and Dawson, have so completely demonstrated that the outline of Creation as it is given in the first chapter of Genesis is in complete harmony with Geology, that the battle has ceased. So

thorough-going an Evolutionist as Professor Romanes has confessed that the order of creative events as recorded in Genesis I. is the same as Geology reveals and Evolution requires. Haeckel, the head of German scientific materialists, has candidly admitted also, the harmony that exists between Genesis and Geology, and he has paid a striking tribute to the scientific accuracy of the Mosaic account of Creation. We need say no more on this point.

But it is now declared that the Biblical account of the Creation was borrowed from Babylon, particularly from the Cuneiform Tablets found in the library of King Assurbanipal at Nineveh. To those who make this assertion I would say, "Have you ever read the Babylonian story of Creation *yourself*, or do you merely repeat what others have told you?" When we compare the two records, the differences are so great that it is impossible to imagine that the Biblical account of Creation was borrowed from Babylon. Genesis I. is a perfect account of Creation *alone*, and its object is to show that all things come from God, and that He alone is the Maker of everything that exists. The Babylonian story of Creation is merely an account of the conflict between the Babylonian god Merodach and the great dragon Tiamat. The heavens and the earth in Genesis I. are made out of *nothing*: in the Babylonian account of Creation they are made out of the dead body of the dragon! In Genesis I. we find a chronological order, and a succession of days of work: this is absent from the Babylonian version. In the first chapter of Genesis all leads up to Man and is subservient to Man. Nothing of the kind occurs in the Babylonian version. So *simple* is the Biblical story of Creation that it can be taught to children: but the confused and complicated story from Babylon cannot be so taught. From beginning to end the first chapter of Genesis is *Monotheistic*. One God alone is the Author of all things. The Babylonian accounts of Creation are *Polytheistic*. Gods and goddesses appear everywhere, and gods are created as well as the earth. The Babylonian statements about Creation are merely the exploits and triumphs of the god Merodach, so that the purely *Monotheistic Spirit* which prevails in Genesis I.—so entirely different from the gross Polytheism of the Babylonian record—proves that no relationship could exist between them. If, as some affirm, the Bible account of Creation was borrowed from Babylon, when did

this borrowing take place? Not in the exile, for the Israelites were too bitterly opposed at that time to the Babylonians, who were cruelly oppressing them, to borrow anything from them. And not in the days of the Israelitish conquest of Canaan, for though the Tel-el-Amarna tablets have shown that Babylonian culture at that time pervaded Palestine, Israel was so bitterly opposed to the Canaanites that any borrowing of religious records from them is quite inconceivable. The only solution of the difficulty is that the ancestors of Abraham—the earliest Semites—brought the records from their primitive home, and that Abraham carried them with him into Canaan.

Although the period between the Fall and the Deluge is noticed in only two chapters in Genesis, it contains the following subjects, which are most important:—(1) The Institution of Sacrifice; (2) The Murder of Abel; (3) The Growth of Civilisation; (4) The Longevity of the Patriarchs; (5) The Increase of Wickedness. We shall discuss these points in order, and we shall show how strongly the discoveries made in different branches of science support the truth of the Bible narratives, and how emphatically they contradict the feeble assertions of the so-called Higher Critics.

The Changeable and Constant in Human Life.

REV. JOHN HARRIES.

It is a truism, someone has said,—“It is one of the saddening, puzzling truths of every life, the fact of change”: Change upon change is the sad law of this mortal life. Tears may start, loving hearts may ache with sorrow, and break with partings—especially in these days of horrid war, and sad change and partings that sever closest ties. Death is the crown of change. Indeed, life is a constant change, and therefore should be a life of prayer and preparation. No man therefore should live unto himself.

The history of all creature existences shows that all things except the Bible are essentially changeable. In *the material creation*, that is so. The ancient and seemingly unchanging heavens shall grow old and perish. The stable

hills of earth shall disappear. Mountains shall fall and come to nought. And some shall say that "The New Earth" is near at hand to be constituted by the second coming and personal reign of Christ on earth. Again, all things change in the *vegetable and animal kingdoms*. No man can look upon a field of corn in its yellow ripeness; or upon a convolvulus withering as soon as gathered, or think upon the seasons of the year, without realizing a chastened feeling of the fleetingness of time and change in all earthly things.

What a vision of change a soldier has in his night-watch on the battlefield when the distant hum or song is heard from a dug-out, and the random shot and shriek of shell foretells of certain death in the morning when the brave lads attack the enemy! Change! No one ever watched in a sick room or hospital when time was measured by the sufferers breathing without realizing sadly—a change, a stern reality of eternity. The entire fabric of the Universe is changing. The great traveller Humboldt gives an interesting account of the first earthquake he witnessed in South America; but which caused an earthquake in his own mind. For, he being a materialist, it overthrew in a moment all his life-long ideas about the eternity of matter, and the continuity of the earth. He was filled by that one event with one thought—viz.: "Universal changes and boundless destruction." Everything is on the wheel of change. Socially—Intellectually, Politically and Religiously. Governments, institutions, churches, schools, colleges, markets, fashions, &c. Where are the early Fathers, Methodists and Reformers? Gone! Where are the vast armies of the four great monarchies of early ages—Assyrian, Persian, Grecian and Roman? Gone! What a change there will be in the map of Europe, parts of Asia and Africa at the end of the war! What a change in millions of Homes!! We get bewildered at the thought and overwhelmed with awe. But thank God for *the Immutability of Christ, the Bible, and His Religion*. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day, and for ever" Heb. xiii. 8. "In summer and in winter shall it be" Zech. xiv. 8. The apostle emphasizes the unchangeability of Christ's Gospel and Religion. Many people think that Christianity is merely the study of a wonderful story of one who lived and died about 1900 years ago.

But there are others who think that Christianity is merely a passport to heaven, and the means of escaping hell.

It is all that, but *more*. The former class believe in Jesus Christ of "YESTERDAY." The latter class believe in Jesus Christ of "for ever" in the future—in glory. But true Christianity, while rejoicing in a great Christian past, and anticipating a great and glorious future, is nevertheless a *great Christian present*—a Jesus Christ of "*to-day*." "Lo ! I am *with you alway*." As He was in the beginning, He is "*NOW*, and ever shall be." God Incarnate with us by His Holy Spirit. The thoughts and theories of men are continually changing. Nothing is more proverbial than the *fickleness of opinions*. The theories of men do not stand as the constant expression of themselves, simply because their authors are constantly changing in their opinions, feelings and purposes. Many a man has lived to refute his early speculative theories and regret their publication—*e.g.*, Tom Paine, it is said, did so to the Quakeress who ministered to his comfort in his last days. So will the higher critics. The tenets of one age have been opposed by that of its successor. And even in the same age the teachings of one school has been contradicted by another. There are heaps of slaughtered theories. But Jesus Christ and His teaching and His religion never change, never can. "My words never fail." "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." As all the radii of a circle converge towards the centre, so do all the truths of the Bible converge in Christ. Or, to put it in other words, as the centre is the only fixed point in a revolving circle, so is Christ the only permanent and fixed and eternal truth in the world of thought. When Spurgeon was asked by an American, "What was the secret of his success," replied, "The Cross," "Christ and Him crucified." Says he : "Change not thy faith with changing times," "The Gospel never alters."

Notwithstanding the gloom that rests in these days of war not only upon Europe but upon the world, the prophet Zechariah gives a cheering message for his own day when God's people were sad and sorely tried and afflicted, and Jerusalem is represented as taken and plundered, that the Lord would come to their help and deliver them (Zech. xiv. 1-7). Then would come a season of joy, &c. (verses 8-11), when "Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem," &c. So the message is cheering to us, prophesying that the river of life shall go from the east and from the west, from the sun's rising to its setting. The Gospel for all climes—constant and

world-wide in its provision, adaptation and claim. Constant in its joy and peace—"In summer and in winter shall *it* be." "The ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are peace." Constant in its supply—"Enough for each, enough for all, enough for ever more." Constant in its availableness—as so many have proved it. As a soldier said in the front trench just before an attack, "I looked to Christ and He filled my soul with courage and joy. I felt He was so near to me, yea, with me." Let us ever remember that amid all the fearful upheavings, change, and devastation and ruin, stress, sorrow and suffering, brought about by the false materialistic philosophy of Germany, Jesus shall be with you, and His comforting teachings by His Holy Spirit. When other helpers fail, He will be with you.

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day!
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, Who changest not, abide with me."

Acknowledgments.

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Small Sums, 31/-

Our thanks are presented to all our friends.

Who Holds the Key of the Mystery of History?

The answer to this question is to be found in Rev. v. The Book of Destiny is close-sealed, as our Lord said to His disciples immediately before His Ascension: "*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His Own power*" (Acts 1 7). We must not chafe with impatience at the darkness of this terrible war-time, and the fact that "no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, is able to open the book, neither to look thereon." The sealed characteristic of the Future is nothing new. From the time of Job all through the ages we have been taught that though the certainty of certainties is this that "**JEHOVAH REIGNETH,**" yet it is always true that "**CLOUDS AND DARKNESS ARE ROUND ABOUT HIM**" (Ps. 97). The Book of Destiny is sealed with **SEVEN** seals. We need not say to our readers that in the symbolism of Biblical numbers Seven indicates completeness. Only one hand can break those seals, the hand of Him Who is the Lamb, the Lion of Judah and the Root of David. The secrets of the Future will only be disclosed as He shall break the seals in the onward march of the processes of history. It is enough for us to know that the *Redeemer* is the Master of the Seals. We may sing with triumphant confidence what is coming to be regarded as the American National Anthem:—

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat:
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

TO OUR READERS.

N.B.—We wish to remind our readers that subscriptions for the Journal for 1918 should be paid in advance (2/- per annum, post free), and that great labour in the office would be saved if our friends would send at once without waiting for notice to the Secretary:—Rev. Harold C. Morton, B.A., 24 Carlisle Terrace, The Hoe, Plymouth. We also call attention to the fact that the 2/- does not cover the cost, and the Committee will be thankful for donations or subscriptions to the funds of the Wesley Bible Union.

On May 1st, Mr. John Duxbury will give Recitals at the Temperance Hall, Huddersfield, in aid of the Funds of the Wesley Bible Union. A Stall for the Sale of Useful and Fancy Articles will be open in connection with these gatherings. If any of our friends would send goods or money for the Sale, these would be gratefully received by Miss Bennetts, Wesley Manse, Norman Park, Huddersfield.

The Journal of the Wesley Bible Union.

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Which Stands First the Church or the Truth?

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

The house of God, which is the church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth What saith the Scripture? If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God The Scripture cannot be broken Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil: for verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. . . . Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth The synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. . . . I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. . . . I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication, and upon her forehead was a name written: **MYSTERY—BABYLON THE GREAT—THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus, and when I saw her I wondered with a great wonder.

(1 Tim. 3¹⁵; Rom. 4³; Gal. 4³⁰; 1 Pet. 4¹¹; John⁸ 10³⁵; Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁸; John 17¹⁷ Rev. 3⁹; 2⁹; 17³⁻⁶).

The question which stands at the head of this article

would be held by many to be an absurd question, especially in view of 1 Tim. 3¹⁵, a passage which is held by Papists and High Anglicans to declare that the church determines the creed and that only that is true which the church declares to be true. In the opinion of those who hold this doctrine the church and the truth are inseparable. They set the church above the Scriptures, and declare that the authority in matters of faith and practice is not the Bible but the church, which, as "the pillar and ground of the truth," determines what men ought to believe.

In examining this question we must first of all ask the attention of our readers to the vexed question of the exegesis of 1 Tim. 3¹⁵. John Wesley in his "*Notes*" follows Bengel, in the punctuation and translation of this passage, and he renders thus: "*How thou oughtest to behave in the house of God, which is the church of the Living God. The mystery of godliness is the pillar and ground of the truth and without controversy a great thing.*"

This interpretation of Bengel and Wesley is only one of several that diverge from those of the Authorized and Revised Versions, to each of which names of great weight are attached. A good epitome of these various interpretations will be found in Adam Clarke's commentary, and Dean Alford's commentary on the Greek Testament* contains a full and learned, and, as I think, most convincing, examination of them all. The chief of these interpretations are the following, the point at issue being the attachment of the words "*the pillar and the ground of the truth.*" (1). Some authorities would attach the words to God, and understand them as meaning that God, whose house the church is, is Himself "the pillar and ground of the truth." (2). Others think that Timothy is thus described, basing their exposition on this, that in the Bible individuals are spoken of as pillars of the church. (3). Others as Bengel and Wesley, use the words as describing the great mystery revealed in the Gospel committed to the church. Bengel, that prince of commentators, argues the case with his usual learning, acumen, and force; but I confess he does not carry my judgment, and after carefully weighing all the arguments, I am convinced that the preponderance of evidence is for the

* I cannot refrain here from commending Alford's commentary to all the readers of this *Journal* who know Greek. It is a treasury of vast learning and deep spiritual insight, marred, however, by a rationalistic taint which alas! though not prominent, is not quite absent.

rendering of the two great English Versions, the Vulgate, the Version of Luther, the Geneva Version, and those of Alford and Weymouth ; although I confess the rendering of Bengel and Wesley has much to be said for it, and the interpretation is open to difference of opinion. Consequently, there is no sure foundation for the High Anglican and Papist contention that the passage is a proof-text for the doctrine that authority for religious truth is vested in the church.

Accepting the rendering of 1 Tim. 3¹⁵ in our English Bible, we may be asked how we can justify the title of this article which seems to imply that the church may be antagonistic to the truth. We reply that the term "church" is used in two senses. It sometimes denotes the real essential church of God which is composed only of those souls who are branches in the Vine, who are vitally united with Christ, members of the Body of which He is the Head. Sometimes it is used of the visible organization here on earth, in which tares mingle with the wheat, and in which alas ! not infrequently the tares have up to the present predominated.

In 1 Tim. 3¹⁵ Paul is speaking of the real church which is "the house of God," the church which in the Epistle to the Ephesians he describes as "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing—holy and without blemish." (Eph. 1²³, 5²⁷). In our title the term "church" is used in the sense in which it is commonly employed in the ordinary speech of men, to designate the visible community that among men passes by that name. As the Apocalypse teaches us, that church sometimes degenerates into "a synagogue of Satan." In the visions of Patmos the twelfth chapter shews us the church, which is the mother of the Man-Child Who was caught up into heaven, as a "woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." Before the chapter closes that church flies into the wilderness. In the seventeenth chapter we discover in the wilderness an apostate church which is depicted for us in the awful form of "the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication."

One of the most serious errors by which men have been misled is that of attributing to the human organizations that have borne the name "church" the attributes which belong to the real church of God, that church which is sanctified by the

word of God which is truth, the church which is "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever," that church which is the worthy bride of the Redeemer, clothed with the robes of righteousness made white by "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (John 17¹⁷; 1 Pet. 1²³; Tit. 3⁵). This church is both narrower and broader than the visible organization called the church in the parlance of men; narrower, inasmuch as many whose names are on the register of that visible organization are not written in heaven; and broader, because it includes many names that have no place in any earthly church-roll. This church is the creation of the word, as Paul tells us: "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water **BY THE WORD**" (Eph. 5²⁵⁻²⁶). Accordingly he declares in 1 Tim. 3¹⁵ that this church is "the pillar and ground of the truth"; that is to say, the supreme purpose for which the church is constituted is to maintain and publish the word by which it was created. Instead of being made the foundation of a doctrine which would supersede the authority of the Scriptures by that of the human organization called the church, 1 Tim. 3¹⁵ declares that the supreme purpose of the church is to set forth the revelation of God to mankind. When it is said that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth," it does not make the church the authority for the determination of what is the Truth, but declares that the church is the servant of the Truth which she is appointed to promulgate.

All along the ages the church has had to contend against antichristian error from within as well as from without. Again and again the tendency has been manifested to identify the church with the visible organization, and to subordinate the proclamation of the truth to the maintenance of the organization. The extension of the church as an organization is too often regarded as the spread of the Christian religion, and the truth is bartered away in order to secure numbers and popularity in the estimation of the ungodly world. Such influences reduced the Jewish church in some of its assemblies into a synagogue of Satan. The consummation of such an apostate church is exhibited to us in the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse.

At the present moment we are face-to-face with a clamour

for reunion of the churches upon the basis of a doctrine of comprehension which would destroy all definite creeds and make the sole ground of union, not the truth, but an organization which is to include within itself not only widely different schemes of doctrine, but antagonistic doctrines even with regard to the central matters of faith. Ecclesiastics are always in peril of drifting into the substitution of loyalty to the organization for loyalty to the Truth and to the Master. Often, no doubt, they are quite unconscious that there has been any such substitution. It is very easy to fall into a frame of mind that takes it for granted that the church instituted by God inherently retains the qualities which she possessed in her foundation, forgetting that she is always the resultant of two forces; those forces being the gift of grace imparted by God, and the other being the *voluntary* appropriation of that grace by the continuous *act* of faith of the individual personalities that compose the church. With all reverence we say that God cannot make any man a living branch of the Vine apart from his voluntary abiding in the Vine by his constant choice so to abide. The church has no inherent power to hold people to herself apart from a constant effort of those people to abide in the church. In short, the real church of God is composed only of those who *all the time take trouble to be holy* in accordance with Paul's injunction: "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure*" (Phil. 2^{12, 13}). Men are very anxious to discover a system of *religion made-easy* by means of which an external church association shall save them automatically, exempting them from the necessity of *continuous strenuousness of effort to maintain themselves in holiness of heart and life*. In short, they want to find this pillow upon which to lay their heads, *the pillow of Churchianity as a substitute for Christianity*. This leads to the central principle that the Church only continues to be a Church as long as she is lifted out of her human elements by the personal acceptance of the Truth by the individuals that compose the church. Every individual who lapses from that Truth is a dead branch fit only for burning in the rubbish-heap. Connection with the church does not make such a man a Christian. He is an Achan in the camp. A church predominatingly composed of Achans is what the Apocalypse calls "a synagogue of Satan."

Those who teach a doctrine of colourless theological comprehension that shall avowedly include in the church deniers of the Scripture and of the infallible authority of all the teachings of our Lord, are destroyers of the Church, whether they know it or not. Their plan is to seek popularity by bowing the knee in worship to the god of this world, and by putting Achan in the throne of Christ.

Advocates of this idea of a church which is to include within itself the most antagonistic doctrines frequently appeal to us to desist from controversy on doctrinal questions on the ground that such controversy is a hindrance to the establishment of a great united church, mighty in numbers, in wealth, in public influence, and in world-wide machinery that shall present a united front to the forces of evil in the world. Our reply to this appeal is this: We would rather see the church shattered to atoms than assist in the building-up of a great organization the wealth and machinery of which would be used to support doctrines that discredit the Bible and dis-crown our Lord and Master. Such an organization would not be an opponent but an ally of the forces of evil.

In other words, we maintain against all comers that the church's message is the basis of its union, that the church exists to be the vehicle to mankind of God's revelation, that there is no reason for the existence of the church apart from the everlasting Gospel which she was created to proclaim to mankind. As we understand 1 Tim. 3¹⁵, it declares that **THE TRUTH** is the final end of the existence of the church. If there be a revelation of God to mankind, it must be ascertainable, and capable of expression in an intelligible form to any earnest soul who asks the question, "*What must I do to be saved?*" The only satisfactory answer to that question is to be found in those words of Paul:—"*Every Scripture, being God-breathed, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be* **PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS**" (2 Tim. 3¹⁶). The Church is built upon the Bible, and her only commission is as God's ambassador to deliver the Bible-message to mankind. To seek to maintain an organization bearing the name of Methodism, if that organization had surrendered the Scriptures and had accepted the doctrine of a fallible Christ, would simply be to support a synagogue of Satan masquer-

ading under the Methodist name. The title of "church" does not make an organization to be a Christian institution. In reality it is *the Truth that constitutes the Church*.

Did David write Psalms?

REV. SHERWIN SMITH, M.A., B.D.

What is the importance of this question? Surely, someone says, it does not matter who wrote the Psalms. They are meditations of religious souls, divinely directed approaches to God, wherein the soul unburdens itself, and not only itself, but unburdens the mind of the Church. They are God helping man to praise, and pray, and repent aright. What matters then who it is, so long as the Church is blessed?

There are two very important reasons why David should have had a main part in it. The first important reason is the *reliability of the Bible*. This was really the thing at stake in the consecration of Dean Hensley Henson as Bishop of Hereford. It is exceedingly doubtful whether he believes in the actual truth of the records of the Virgin Birth and of the Resurrection of the body of our Lord. His reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury was very unsatisfactory. But you say, what was this to do with David? A great deal. This is where Bishop Gore is in a difficulty. He is all for the actual truth of the records of our Lord, but he has accepted the principle of fabrication, forgery, make-believe in the Old Testament, and even in the New Testament in the 2nd Epistle of Peter. The principle of fabrication Dr. Sanday and his friends are using for all they are worth in the New Testament. They are saying that the writers of the New were brought up on the Old, imbibed its unhistorical methods, learnt the art of forging events which never happened and of imparting to them spiritual meaning, and that, therefore, if you do not accept the Old, you cannot stand on the New. This, of course, is Bishop Gore's look-out, but I, for one, make my stand on the Old, and I accept its records as they stand. The whole Bible regards David as a great Psalmist, and its reliability is involved in his being one.

The second important reason is *the authority of our Lord*. He not only assumed that David was a Psalmist, but He argued from his authorship of one particular Psalm, Psalm 110—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." He asks a very pertinent question of the Pharisees. "If David in the Spirit call him Lord, how is he his son?" Now you cannot in that particular instance substitute "the inspired psalmist" for "David," as some would have us do. You cannot say, "If the inspired psalmist in the Spirit call him Lord, how is he the inspired psalmist's son?" He is not the inspired psalmist's son, he is David's Son, and the whole argument is of no value unless the Psalm was written by David. In fact, our Lord's use of that Psalm shows the working of His own mind, and how from the Old Testament He saw the truths of His own nature flashed back upon Him as He looked. Our Lord has stamped David as a Psalmist.

It may be asked, then what is the difficulty? Why should anyone object to David's being a Psalmist? Why indeed? But people object to anything and everything to-day. They have lost the spirit of appreciation, the art of understanding. They no longer revel in the spiritual truths disclosed by David, nor become lost as they join in his praise. They must do something, though, and so they turn and criticise. They are prepared to prove that he did not write Psalms after all.

Their great proof is that he was totally unsuited to write Psalms. He belonged to a rude age, say they, he was a sort of freebooting chieftain, there was no gentleness about him; in fact, as the Bible says, 'he was a man of blood.' But strangely enough the Bible, which calls him a 'man of blood' and is the chief authority for this particular reading of David's character, yet attributes Psalms to him and sees no incongruity. I once heard a Wesleyan minister say, that he was very thankful that Psalms had been taken out of the hands of such a blood-thirsty cruel and unspiritual man as David was. That Wesleyan minister adopted a self-righteous and idiotic attitude. Idiotic, because he so glibly pitted his own little feelings against the attitude of the whole Bible, which has put the Psalms into the hands of David; and who shall take them thence? Self-righteous, because every sinner that ever lived takes comfort from the glories of David.

David is an everlasting instance of the wonders of grace. "Such wonders love could do." David could sing,

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free,
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me."

It was because of this that he wrote Psalms. There have been miracles like that since: John Newton, the cruel slave-driver, could by-and-by sing, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," and Sir Walter Raleigh, who might be called a buccaneer of the Spanish Americas, yet sings:

"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to rest upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage,
With these I'll take my pilgrimage."

There is a danger in these days of horrid scientific warfare of our turning upon all the fighting men of past ages, and denying them the grace of the Lord who bought them.

When once we get over carping criticism, there is no difficulty in David's writing Psalms. He was a wonderful *musician*. There is no doubt about 'David's harp of royal sound.' A youth who could steal the madness out of Saul's mind by his music, all the while watching the features of Saul as the king toyed with his javelin, was no mean musician. He was a great *poet*. He has not only left us Psalms, but he has left us the greatest of all elegies, the *Lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan*.

"Thy beauty, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places.
How are the mighty fallen!"

There is no need to ask whether such a man could write Psalms, who has given such an example of boundless love and generosity over his enemy Saul and his friend Jonathan. He was a man of intense *religious* feeling. When he had captured Zion, he could not rest neither would he let sleep visit his eyelids, until he had made a place for the Ark of the Lord: and the pages of the Bible still seem to rock with the joy of David as they brought the ark up from its exile in Kiriath-Jearim and set it into its resting-place.

"Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is the King of Glory?
The Lord of hosts, He is the King of Glory."

This very name for God, 'the Lord of hosts,' a warrior's name, dates from that memorable day.

David, too, was a *shepherd*, and among all lovely things he had been. Who among the living and the dead disputes with David the authorship of "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want?" He was a *man of war*—"All Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man,"—and he sang "He teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." He was a truly *penitent* man. Zadok and Abiathar wanted to take the Ark of the Lord out of Jerusalem when David fled before Absalom, but he said, "No, return with it; if the Lord delights in me, I shall see both it and His habitation, but if not, let Him do unto me as seemeth Him good." When Shimei cursed him from above, and flung down stones and dust upon him, he would let no man hurt him. He said, "My son, which came forth out of my bowels, seeketh my life to destroy it; how much more may this Benjamite now do it?" And when he came back in triumph and they wanted to put Shimei to death, he still said, "Shall any man be put to death to-day in Israel? Do I not know that this day I am king over Israel?" How men clung to him in his misfortune, strangers accompanied, and all men vied to weep with him and honour him. How he surpassed them all and all the world besides, as he went up to the chamber over the gate, and mourned for Absalom. There is no difficulty in thinking such a man could write Ps. 51. The difficulty is to think of anyone else. He shines supreme, and Christopher Smart, the mad poet, saw more than all these wise critics put together, when he wrote his *Song to David*, "Pleasant—and various as the year," he calls him, "Man, soul, and angel without peer, Priest, champion, sage and boy." Then there is the Bible's own description—"Sweet Psalmist of Israel, the Man in whom the spirit of God is." He has his detractors, but it is neither charity nor truth to rob him of his Psalms.

Notes.

Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth.

The above is the happily-chosen title of Dr. Arnot's book on the Proverbs. A commentary on the Proverbs written by a man of the Modernist school says there is very little religion in the book, and treats it as on the whole a purely human treatise on the conduct of life. Dr. Arnot's view is

much better, and the devout reader of the book will soon discover that it is indeed the light of the Divine Wisdom thrown upon the dusty and difficult paths of daily life. No book in the Bible is more appropriate for reading at family worship than this book, which teaches its readers how the wisdom that cometh from above would have us deal with the humblest, commonest and most trivial circumstances of daily life. The man who says that there is little religion in the Book of Proverbs does not understand what religion is. The whole end of religion is to lead men into the paths of holiness in the daily round and common task. Every doctrine of theology is a doctrine that has an ethical application. Paul shows this in his Epistles, leading them up as he does to a climax of precepts concerning daily life. What, for instance, is the climax of his sublime Epistle to the Ephesians in which he seems to take his readers into the third heavens into which he was caught up as he tells in 2 Cor. xii. ? The climax of that great Epistle in which he displays to us the mysteries and marvels of "the heavenly places" is such things as these:—Children obey your parents, parents provoke not your children, husbands love your wives, slaves obey your masters, masters be gentle to your slaves. In the same way we would say to our readers that there is no better way of demonstrating the reality of our belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures than living out the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs in the common ways of life.

What does the Book of the Proverbs say about the Way to Hell?

That way is terribly described in Prov. ii. ; vi. ; vii. This is an hour for plain speaking about the sins of which those chapters speak. This nation has been greatly shocked by what is known as the Cayeux scandal. Mr. Macpherson's answer in the House of Commons about the house of vice near the British lines has greatly moved all the lovers of purity throughout the Empire. We are glad to know that this place is put out of bounds by the military authorities. But it is very disquieting that there should be manifest any disposition on the part of any of those connected with our Government to give any, even the most distant, sanction, to the practice of loathsome vice.

The plea of the Advocates of State-regulation of Vice.

The central plea of those who defend the system of State-controlled brothels is in substance this : We know that this vice is sure to be practised ; consequently it is well that the State should take it under its control in order to minimize the mischiefs resulting therefrom as far as may be. The plea is wrong in principle and is a part of that miserable machiavelian opportunism which is so terribly prevalent in political circles, an opportunism that is based upon a doctrine severely condemned in the Bible : *Let us do evil that good may come.* The French name for these State man-traps unwittingly lays bare the mischief of this system of State-recognition of vice—*Maisons tolérées* (*tolerated houses*). The name implies at least an approach to State sanction of a vice that, by undermining the principles of chastity, strikes a blow at the foundations of the State, attacking the family and the sanctity of the home and of the marriage tie. If the principle is to be carried out that prevalent vice is to be recognized by the State and to be practised under State-surveillance, where shall we stop ? Suppose we were to argue thus : "Burglars are sure to exist in nations such as they are now. Therefore, inasmuch as we cannot exterminate burglary, had we not better establish a Burglary Board so that the evil may be checked by providing that the crime may be carried on under Government oversight ?" This would be really more reasonable than an arrangement for Government-oversight of Fornica-

tion, seeing that Fornication is a far greater and more mischievous crime than Burglary. Indeed, all these proposals for state management of vice, such as State publichouses, State lotteries, State gambling houses, State brothels, all resolve themselves into this: *Seeing we cannot exterminate the devil, let us seek to control him by entering into partnership with him!*

The mind of God concerning Lasciviousness.

Those who recognize the Bible as the word of God have no doubt as to God's condemnation of all sins of uncleanness even in thought. We commend to our readers a concordance-study of the Bible on this subject, tracing through the Scriptures all that the Holy Ghost had said upon the subject under such words as *fornication, whoremonger, adultery, lasciviousness, uncleanness*, and the like. But we learn the mind of God on this subject, not only from His written word, but from His revelation in the works of His hands. Whatever discussions may arise concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures, no one but an atheist can question that the laws of nature are infallibly the expression of the mind of God. The terrible diseases that follow violation of the laws of chastity are an unutterably awful commentary on this doctrine of the Bible,

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.

Venereal diseases with their unspeakable horrors and with their hereditary consequences shew the folly of the mawkish softness so prevalent in Modernist circles which finds expression in such utterances as these: "*God is so merciful that He will never inflict terrible suffering as a penalty for sin.*" The answer to this is to be found in the lock hospital which is a very hell on earth. The men who lie rotting to death in vice-disease constitute an awful proclamation of the fact that God has so constituted the universe that violations of the sanctity of holy love entail the most awful tortures upon those who are guilty of them. It is an unmistakable certainty of scientific fact that is set before us in those terrible words of the Book of Proverbs: "He that goeth after a harlot is as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool goeth to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto Me now, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of My mouth. Let not thine heart incline to the ways of the harlot. Go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." (c.vii. 22-27).

Modernism and Social Purity.

Modernism is a conflate of two elements: lax ethics and lax doctrine which act and interact the one on the other in systole and diastole, now one is the cause and the other the effect, and *vice versa*. One of the chief causes of lax doctrine is a worldliness that desires to throw off the restraints of Bible-teaching. On the other hand, when men adopt loose views of doctrine, careless living is constantly the fruit. Worldly professors of religion seek for a teaching that does not prick their consciences. When men have given up the authority of Scripture, they find it easy to manufacture an ethical standard to suit their convenience. When they say as one of their leaders in Wesleyan Methodism did: "*The infallibilities have gone and we are glad to see them go,*" they throw off all commandments, and they have no infallible standard of ethics to which to appeal. Consequently, Modernist doctrine is working sad havoc in the realm of chastity. This is seen in easy divorce laws, in what is so well called on the Continent *pornographic* literature and *pornographic* art, in lust-breeding amusements, and lust-kindling dress, in

lewd novels, and indecent pictures, and, generally, in a lack of circumspection in the relationship of the sexes. The kind of pictures on the hoardings advertising theatres and picturedromes constantly tell their own story, and show the tendency to pander to the vulgar, and to awaken evil suggestion in the thought and imagination. A return to the teachings and ideals of Puritanism is earnestly to be desired. Unless there is an awakening of the national conscience on this question, as the decreasing birth-rate shows us, there is nothing before the nations that walk in the way of Modernism but extermination by the operation of the inexorable laws of nature.

The Conspiracy of Guilty Silence.

Much of the moral depravity with its terrible fruitage of disease, of physical and mental incapacity, and imbecility is the outcome of a foolish prudery in relation to sex questions that leaves the young to discover the secrets of their nature by hap and chance. Oh the skeletons that strew the floor of the slaughter-house of the sexual vice who are there through the conspiracy of guilty silence that left the young in ignorance to become the easy prey of the harpies of libertinism! What is needed is straightforward Biblical plainness on these subjects. It is nothing short of cruel to leave the young to go out to the voyage of life in ignorance of the body-barque in which that voyage is to be made. It ought to be compulsory that a part of every young person's education should be instruction concerning the physiology of their own body. The devil has agents enough abroad eager to lead the young into the abysses of evil. It is nothing short of criminal to leave our youth to learn the mysteries of their body from demon-agents who will teach them these things in a way that will permanently polute their imagination.

The necessity for scrupulous delicacy in dealing with Sex-questions.

Though we have spoken above concerning the dangers of guilty silence, yet it is equally necessary to guard against a brutal plainness that may easily degenerate into a vulgarity verging upon obscenity. Teaching on this subject is a sphere in which no clumsy or apprentice hand should meddle. It requires a refinement of spirit and elevation of thought that proceeds from close and intimate communion with God. Those who deal with these matters should dwell in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus. This work requires not merely Biblical plainness, but the Biblical atmosphere. It belongs to "the wisdom that is from above" which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." This wisdom "God giveth to to all men liberally" (James 3¹⁷; 1⁵).

The Theology of the Body.

Those who want to know the mind of God in relation to the sexual life should minutely carefully and prayerfully study what the Bible has to say concerning the relation of the body to the spiritual life. Here again we would urge a careful concordance examination of the subject, tracing the words "body," "flesh," "eyes," "hands," "feet," "members," "mouth," "lips," "tongue," "flesh" and kindred words through the Scriptures. In this study the fundamental truth to be borne in mind is that which the Holy Ghost speaking by Paul has expressed in that wonderful axiom: **"EVERY SIN THAT A MAN DOETH IS WITHOUT THE BODY"** (1 Cor. 6¹⁸).

On all these questions much prevalent evil results from the idea expressed in a ridiculous phrase too often used: "a sinful body." The body cannot

sin. "*Sin is lawlessness*" (1 John 3⁴ Rev. Ver.) The body may be and constantly is the instrument of sin or the vehicle of temptation. But matter cannot sin. The free-will that rebels against God sins against the body when it uses it to accomplish its wicked will. The sin is in the soul. It is a wicked subterfuge when the sinner tries to shift off the guilt from his own personality to the bodily appetite. The sin is the act of the personality not of the body. The secret of holiness lies in a regenerate personality fully consecrated to God, inhabited and controlled by the Holy Ghost.

The Gymnastics of the Spiritual Life.

Surprise power is one of the greatest gifts of literary style. It is one of the most effective instruments for emphasis, for awakening attention, and compelling thought. It was a gift with which Paul was richly endowed and which he used with startling effect. An instance of this is to be found in 1 Tim. 4⁷ where we read "*Exercise thyself unto godliness.*" The literal translation of Paul's startling Greek is: "*Be a GYMNAST unto godliness.*" What a striking form of declaring that in the spiritual life the man who would be an athlete in the service of Christ must train and discipline himself as a gymnast does to attain the power to perform his feats of strength and skill! In the Christian gymnasium the discipline of the body is no small part of Christian ethics, as Paul teaches us in 1 Cor. 9²⁷ where we read in the Revised Version: I **BUFFET** my body and bring it unto bondage (Gk. lit. enslave it). The Greek word rendered "buffet" is a very striking one indeed. Dean Alford's comment on it is: "to strike heavily in the face so as to render black and blue." Etymologically the word means "*to strike in the face,*" and was a technical word of the Greek pugilists meaning "*to give a black eye.*" Such is the strong language which the Spirit of Inspiration speaking through Paul employs to describe the severe discipline to which the Christian athlete ought to subject his body. As we said above, the body is constantly the vehicle of temptation. As John Bunyan has taught us in his greatest book, "*The Holy War,*" the way into the City of Man-soul is through the Five Gates—Eye Gate, Ear Gate, Feel Gate, Nose Gate, and Mouth Gate. If the devil is to be kept out of the City, there must always be a strong and vigilant guard at all the gates. If a man so intensely spiritual as Paul found it necessary thus to discipline the body, how certain it is that no Christian can afford to do other than exercise a constant holy restraint on all the bodily appetites. It is a fundamental law of Christian ethics: **KEEP THE SOUL ON THE TOP.**

The sanctity of Marriage.

The Bible has set before us in the most emphatic way the sanctity of Marriage. The Holy Ghost speaking by Paul declares that Marriage is a sacred symbol of the union between Christ and the Church. (Eph. 5²²⁻²³). In the vision of Patmos John was shown that the Church was the Lamb's Bride. The prophetic word constantly speaks of the marriage-relation between God and the Church, and Paul tells us that in Eph. 3²⁵ that "the whole family" (we should render it "all fatherhood") "in heaven and earth is named" after the archetype of fatherhood in the Godhead itself. These indications show how completely the things on the earth and in heaven are associated, and what sacrilege it is when the family bonds are desecrated by unchastity. All sins of this kind are violations of the foundations of the family life, of the state, and of religion.

The only true basis of Chastity.

Paul has shown us what was the only true basis of Christian Chastity, which demands purity of thought and desire, when he says: "What I know

ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God, and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God, therefore, in your body" (1 Cor. 6¹⁹⁻²⁰). The true dignity of the human body is not discerned until it is seen in its redemption relation to God. Entire sanctification finds its climax in the sanctification of the body, as we learn from such Scriptures as the following:—"I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that ye present your **BODIES** a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12¹). "The God of Peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, soul, and **BODY** be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 5²³). Here alone is to be found the emancipation of human nature from the lusts of uncleanness. Such things as the provocation of lust associated with the dancing-together of the opposite sexes and other kindred worldly amusements are irreconcilable with the Christian standard of purity. Much of the church declension which we are now deploring throughout Christendom arises from a worldly conformity that pays no heed to the Apostolic injunction: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said: I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be My people. Wherefore, come ye out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you and be to you a Father, and ye shall be to Me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having, therefore, these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 6¹⁴⁻⁷¹).

Modernism taught to Children.

One of the greatest perils of the present is Modernist teaching in the school. For long we have known that there is much of this in many day-schools. Indeed, there are some men of influence in educational circles who do not hesitate to say that Christian teaching has been ethically mischievous in British culture; and who urge the elimination of the Christian element from our educational system. It is not in Germany only that doctrines akin to those of Nietzsche are creeping into schools, but there is in this country a drift towards the opinion of Nietzsche that Christianity should be swept away in the interests of the onward-march of the race and the attainment of the goal of man's development. What we have here spoken of is the bottom of the down-grade, but it is the logical outcome of the doctrines that depreciate the Bible and ascribe error of Jesus Christ. If the germs of these ideas are implanted in the child-mind, they lead on to the abandonment of all reverence, of all belief in authority, and the acceptance of the doctrine that every man is a law unto himself—the doctrine of *the Will-to-Power*, the essence of which is that it is *the duty of every man to break the fetters of all restraint*. The full ripe fruit of this Satanic Culture is to be seen in Germany at the present time. The German nation is now demonstrating to mankind that a Godless Culture can produce men who use all the might of knowledge and skill for the perpetration of crimes and abominations that surpass in loathsome wickedness the worst doings of savages. We are inclined to think that German barbarism has touched the lowest depth of degradation of which history contains the records, and we believe in what is known as German theology is the main cause of the fall of the nation of Luther.

Modernism in the Sunday School.

Bad as Modernism is in the day-school, it is immeasurably worse in the Sunday school. Alas! we know that Modernist teaching is in Sunday schools as well as day schools, planting the germs of doubt concerning the Scriptures in the minds of the children! There are manuals for Sunday school teachers that are affirming that much of the Old Testament is nothing but Jewish folk-lore of the same kind as the folk-lore of other nations; that the Book of Jonah is an allegory; that the Book of Daniel is an historical romance; that many Scripture miracles are legends created by the imagination, proceeding, as Rev. George Jackson has said, "from the desire to surround great names with a halo of glory"; and that the Pentateuch in the form in which we have it is a forgery of the sacerdotal caste at the time of the Captivity, palming off their elaborate ceremonial system upon the nation under the pretence that it was a revelation given to Moses by God. It is easy to see what will be the necessary effect of such teachings on the mind of the rising generation. They will say, as Nietzsche is reported to have said, that the theologians shewed them that there was nothing in Christianity. What will be the ethical fruit of teachings that represent such a book as the vehicle of God's revelation? If God can use falsehood and forgery as instruments of the communication of His mind to man, what becomes of the basis of ethics? If a forged Pentateuch can be in any sense a chosen instrument of God for the instruction of mankind, then it is quite allowable for men to imitate Him. The direct ethical inference from such teaching is: *It is quite legitimate to do evil that good may come, for if God uses lying as a channel of revelation, then surely there is no harm in my pursuing a similar course.* The natural fruit of such doctrines is the depravity that will tear up the most solemn contracts as "*scraps of paper*," and will treat the most sacred pledges as worthless. There is a direct connection between the doctrines of German Criticism of the Bible and *German Ethics*.

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

No. XXVII.

RECONCILIATION.

BY REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

The Scripture represents Reconciliation as a mutual transaction between God and man: as something taking place on the part of God towards man, as well as something taking place on the part of man towards God. But much modern teaching, by either opposing or distorting the doctrine of the Atonement, takes away one side of this transaction; maintaining that there is no Reconciliation on the part of God, that there is no necessity for this, and that Reconciliation only has to do with the act of man towards God. It is therefore important that this aspect of the truth should be emphasised and rightly understood.

I.—THE RELATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. The very idea of Reconciliation supposes a previous state of hostility, and that this state of hostility is reciprocal. That human nature is hostile to God and His law requires no proof; but this is not the whole of that relation of man in which the Scripture declares him to be at enmity with

God, and therefore needing reconciliation and the making of peace between himself and God. That relation is a legal relation, as between a Sovereign and an offender who has violated His law and risen up against His authority, and is therefore treated as an enemy: as one who is the object of displeasure on the part of Another. The word *echthros* (enemy) is applied to man both in an active sense, denoting his hostility to God; and in a passive sense, meaning that he is regarded by Another as an enemy and the object of displeasure; and that Other can only be God Himself. The word is used in this passive sense both in classical Greek writers and in the New Testament. It is so used in Rom. 11²⁸ of the Jewish people who were rejected and punished for refusing the gospel: "enemies for your sakes." It has the same sense in Rom. 5¹⁰, and there in close connection with the Reconciliation effected by Christ: "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son"; that is when we were accounted as enemies, and objects of divine displeasure. In harmony with this the Scriptures constantly and plainly teach that there is Anger and Wrath in God. Consider the following:—Psa. 7¹¹; Isa. 12¹; John 3³⁶; Rom. 1¹⁸, 2^{5,8}; Eph. 2³; 1 Thess. 1¹⁰; Rev. 6¹⁶. These passages, and many others, make it clear that there is in God something which the Scriptures repeatedly call "anger" and "wrath," and which only such language can make known to us. We are not to make this mean that such anger and wrath has anything in it like passion, or desire of revenge; but is rather a declaration of His holy attitude towards sin, and His righteous judgment of its desert.

II.—THE MEANING OF RECONCILIATION. Out of this relation between God and man arises the necessity for Reconciliation, which is mutual on both sides. In Rom. 5¹⁰ the act of reconciling is ascribed to God and not to us. But if reconciliation merely consisted in the laying aside of our enmity then the act would be ours alone. It cannot mean merely the laying aside of our enmity because the reconciliation is said to be something done "while we were yet enemies," and it is expressly attributed to the "death of His Son." Again in 2 Cor. 5^{19,20} the manner of the reconciliation is said to be, not our act in laying aside our enmity, but the act of God in "not imputing our trespasses to us": that is in pardoning our offences and restoring us to His favour. His prior reconciliation to the world was effected by the death of Christ. Our actual reconciliation to Him is distinguished from this by saying that He "hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation" by which all men are intreated "to be reconciled to God." In Rom. 5¹¹ we are said to "receive the reconciliation" (not "atonement" as in A.V.), which implies that reconciliation comes to man from the side of God, and is not due to any act on his part. Receiving the reconciliation must be equivalent to receiving "forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13^{38,39}). If, then, to receive reconciliation is to receive forgiveness of sins, deliverance from wrath and condemnation, reconciliation itself must relate to God's displeasure towards sin, and to the existence of wrath and threatened punishment. The very notion of our being reconciled to God seems to strictly mean the turning away of His wrath from us. With respect to the special terms employed Dr. Whitby says that "both in profane and Jewish writers the words "CATALLAGE" (reconciliation) and "CATALLASSO" (to reconcile) naturally import the reconciliation of one that is angry or displeased with us." In 1 Sam. 29⁴: "Wherewith

should he reconcile himself unto his master"? does not mean "How shall he remove his own anger against his master"? but "How shall he remove his master's anger against him"? So in Matt. 5^{23, 24}, "If thy brother hath ought against thee, first be reconciled to thy brother," means to appease and conciliate him, seeing that by some injury done he had excited his anger and displeasure; so that the words really mean, "Seek to get thy brother reconciled to thee." In some passages, of course, the terms "enemy" and "reconciliation" are both applied to man's attitude to God, but taking the language of the New Testament as a whole it cannot be explained under this aspect. When that anger of God which the Scripture describes as directed against sinners ceases to be so directed there is surely a change (or something that we are compelled to call a change) in the attitude of God towards man, as well as in the attitude of man towards God. But this is only our imperfect way of speaking. We are obliged to use anthropomorphic expressions which imply a change of relation on the part of God as well as on the part of men; and yet in some way that we cannot fully comprehend we may believe that with him there is "no variableness." The only satisfactory explanation of the many passages which speak of enmity and reconciliation between God and man is to regard them as descriptive of something that is mutual and not on one side only. Through the mediation of Christ God is reconciled to the human race. He lays aside His displeasure against mankind. The world stands towards Him in a new relation, being no more the object of wrath. Provision is also made by which all men may individually be reconciled to Him. Through "the ministry of reconciliation" they are invited to lay aside their enmity, and enter into a state of acceptance and union with God. The ambassadors of Christ are sent forth to proclaim to men that God in Christ is already reconciled to them, and to beseech them to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5¹⁸⁻²⁰). Those who deny that Reconciliation was required on the part of God rob the Atonement of the greater part of its sublime significance. Much modern teaching (as, for example, last year's Fernley Lecture, page 311) represents the Cross as simply an affecting exhibition of the love of God to men; and of course it does amazingly exhibit that wondrous love, but this does not by any means exhaust the profound meaning of the Cross.

III.—PROPIITIATION. Another great kindred word having an equally essential place in this subject is the word "Propitiation," which literally means "to bring near, to appease, to turn away the wrath of an offended person." Prof. Sandy says that propitiation is properly used only in reference to a personal agent, that in propitiation SOMEONE is propitiated, and that this Someone can only be God Himself. It is also made perfectly clear that the Person making the propitiation is Christ, and that the propitiatory sacrifice is His blood (Rom. 3²⁵; 1 John 2², 4¹⁰). The Greek word (*hilasmos*) is from the verb so often used by Greek writers to "express the action of a person who in some appointed way turns away the wrath of a deity. All Greek authorities, whether poets, historians or others, use the word in this sense." In order to evade the force of this fact some deny the existence of wrath in God; and therefore, while admitting the proper meaning of propitiation, assert that in Scripture it cannot have its proper meaning. In order to give some plausibility to their statement they distort the orthodox view, and charge it with representing God as an implacable and revengeful being, who is only made placable

and disposed to show mercy by satisfaction¹¹ being made to Him through the suffering and death of His Son. But this is neither the teaching of Scripture, nor of those who hold the doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement. God is love; but He is also Holiness and Righteousness. There is in Him a most tender compassion towards the sinning human race, and His Son, by Whom the propitiation was made, was the Father's free gift to us. This is the highest proof of His love (Rom. 8³²; 1 John 4¹⁰). He is Himself the Fountain and First Moving Cause of that provision of recovery and salvation which the redemption of Christ effected. While He is the *Reconciled*, He is also Himself the *Reconciler*.

IV.—METHODIST TEACHING. Methodist Theology is in perfect harmony with the Scriptural views here set forth. It everywhere assumes the existence of God's holy anger and displeasure against sin; that reconciliation concerns His relation to men, as well as men's relation to Him, and that this two-fold reconciliation is made possible, and may be gloriously consummated, through the redeeming work of Christ. All this again is, if possible, still more emphatically embodied in Methodist Hymnology. If it be true, as much modern teaching is asserting, that there was no wrath in God, and no reconciliation on the side of God, and no necessity for it, then many of our most characteristic and most precious hymns ought to be destroyed. Such as the following:—No. 161 (v. 2), 278, 308 (v. 1), 336 (vv. 1, 3), 363 (vv. 3, 5), 371 (v. 1), 512 (v. 4), and many others.

We maintain the clear teaching of Scripture to be that Reconciliation was necessary not only on the part of man towards God, but also on the part of God towards man; and that this was accomplished by the atoning death of Christ upon the Cross, although in a way that we cannot fully comprehend. And consequently we also maintain that the evangelical standpoint of both our Methodist Standards and our Methodist Hymns is in perfect harmony with the teaching of Scripture on this great theme.

Antediluvian History in the Light of Modern Science.

REV. D. GATH WHITLEY.

I.

Immediately after the narrative of the Fall, the first thing the Bible brings before us is the practice of Sacrifice. How came men to sacrifice things animate and inanimate to the Divine Being? This is the question which is now before us.

The Higher Critics deny the Divine origin of the rite of Sacrifice, for they are ever trying to eliminate the supernatural, both from the Bible narratives and from the events

of everyday life. According to them the custom of sacrificing animals upon altars originated merely in Man's fancy, for men *imagined* that the Deity would be pleased with their gifts, and they originated the rite of Sacrifice by a mere freak of their own imagination! Of course, in setting forth this idea they deny the truth of the Bible altogether. But they are in the habit of doing this. They call the Bible statements "unhistorical," which every one sees is only another way of calling the narratives of Holy Scripture *untrue*. They have not the courage in the face of public opinion to use the latter word.

Every believer in the truth of the Bible knows that Sacrifice was instituted by God. Cain was directed to offer a sin-offering¹ when his own offering of fruit and vegetables was rejected. Abraham was ordered by God to sacrifice Isaac. Job's friends were commanded by God to offer up a sacrifice for their sins. The Passover, and all the Mosaic sacrifices of the Temple and the Tabernacle were instituted by the direct command of God. When therefore the Higher Critics declare that these accounts are "unhistorical," they simply mean that they consider the Bible to be untrue!

But the Divine origin of Sacrifice is still more clearly taught in Genesis iii. 21. Here we are told that God made clothes for Adam and Eve of the skins of animals, and as Man was forbidden to kill these animals for food, they must have been slain by God's command in order to be offered up in sacrifice. The *antiquity* of Sacrifice is also proved by recent scientific discoveries. The earliest men who lived in Western Europe, and who hunted the lion, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus, practised the rite of Sacrifice. An ancient carving has been found in one of the bone-caves of Southern France, which was undoubtedly executed by these earliest men. It is the oldest picture in the world, as it was carved by men who lived before the Flood. It represents a man offering up horses in sacrifice to the great sea-god, which has the forms of a gigantic serpent which lived in the sea. Probably the Higher Critics are ignorant of this discovery, and this is another proof that while they talk so much about science, they are really ignorant of its latest and most important discoveries.

1 "▲ Sin-offering lieth at the door" is the correct rendering of the words."

The oldest mention of Sacrifice in history is found in the inscriptions of the oldest (or Akkadian) Empire in Babylon, long before the time of Abraham. From these cuneiform inscriptions we learn that animals were offered as an atonement for sin, and their blood was sprinkled as an expiation. As far as we can go back therefore in history we find sacrifice, and the death of the victim was to take away sin. Sacrifice therefore as a religious rite was *primitive, universal*, and *atoning*, and as also the *very best* animals were offered, it is plain that the offerer knew of the justice of God, and of the evil of sin. Sacrifice therefore must have been a Divine Institution.

Now let us consider the murder of Abel by Cain. The truth of this terrible event is expressly declared by Christ Himself (St. Matthew xxiii. 35), and by St. Paul (Hebrew xi. 4²) and St. John (1 St. John iii. 12), who both wrote under the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost—refer to the event as an absolutely true occurrence. Will the Higher Critics dare to say that our Lord was mistaken when He spoke of the murder of Abel as a true event, and will they call it “unhistorical” when Christ Himself declared it to be true?

Let us see what Science has to say on this subject. The murder of Abel by Cain has light cast upon it, from the Babylonian Monuments. Istar, the great Babylonian goddess, was said to have had two sons. Tammuz a keeper of sheep, and Adar a fierce wild man, who was the god of war. Adar killed Tammuz, and the “weeping for Tammuz” was the lamentation of Istar for her slain son. The killing of Abel by Cain therefore was remembered by the Babylonians under the rite of Weeping for Tammuz, and the lamentations made for him were actually practised by the idolatrous Hebrews in the Temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel viii. 14). The Greeks also continued the rite in the legend of Venus and Adonis, to which Milton refers in the well known lines—

Tammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Tammuz yearly wounded.

2 I see no reason to doubt the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The name Adonis was transferred to a river in Syria now called Nahr Ibrahim, and it is curious to see how Science has explained the annual reddening of its waters which was in the legend ascribed to the yearly flow of the blood of Tammuz. In its inundations at regular seasons the waters of the river Adonis and its tributaries flow in violent flood over beds of red sand and red mud, which cause its waters at the time of the inundation to assume a red colour, and this gave rise to the legend that at that time the Adonis was flowing red with the blood of Tammuz yearly wounded !

This was associated with the heathen rite known as the Weeping for Tammuz. In the vision of Ezekiel of the hidden idolatries performed in the Temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel viii. 14) the prophet saw the Jewish women at the western gate "weeping for Tammuz," when according to Milton—

The love tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah.

But we have not yet done with the story of Cain and Abel. According to the Babylonian traditions, Ishtar (*i.e.* Eve) descended into the world of spirits beneath the earth to search for her dead son Tammuz (Abel) whose untimely death was bewailed every year by the Syrian and Babylonian maidens.

It is also to be noticed that in the account in Genesis Cain having slain Abel builds a city. Now in ancient history we constantly find the building of a city associated with the murder of a brother. In the Babylonian calendar the Zodiacal sign of Gemini "the twin brethren" was associated with the month of brick building. Other nations besides the Babylonians, also associated the foundation of a city with the murder of a brother, such as the Greeks and the Romans. Professor Lenormant (one of the most talented of French archæologists, and a firm believer in the truth of the Bible) also identifies Cain and Abel with the Cabiri. These were mysterious personages in the ancient heathen ceremonies, and were two brothers, the elder of whom killed the younger, the murder being commemorated in secret rites called the Cabiric mysteries. Professor Pinches also draws attention to

the stories among the Assyrians and Babylonians of a man greatly beloved who was cut off suddenly, and came to an end by violent means, and he shows that the name Tam-muz (for whom the periodical "weeping" was made) is Babylonian, and has a remote resemblance to the Hebrew Abel.

Be this as it may, we have said enough to show that many heathen nations in ancient days preserved the story of the killing of Abel by Cain, although they overloaded the narrative with polytheistic additions and mystical absurdities. The story therefore is true ; its truth being witnessed by the sciences of Comparative Religion and Archæology.

IF ALL WERE LOVE!

If all were love, instead of lust
Of gold, of fame, of power,
The ministries of kindly deeds
Would fill each golden hour,—
If all were love.

If all were love, the demon drink
Hurled back to hell would be,
And o'er the far-flung earth would
wave
The banner of the Free,—
If all were love.

If all were love, impurity
Would hide its head for shame,
And woman, everywhere, would bear
A sister's sacred name,—
If all were love.

If all were love, the loathsome slum,
Dread haunt of foul disease,
Would yield to dwellings that might
share
The sunshine and the breeze,—
If all were love.

If all were love, the lone, the poor,
Would have our tend'rest care,
And of all gifts on us bestowed
Would reap a bounteous share,—
If all were love.

If all were love, God's little ones,
With faces half-divine,
Would not be left, as thousands are,
In want and woe to pine,—
If all were love.

If all were love, the jarring note,
That causes needless pain,
Transmuted into cadence sweet,
Would ne'er be heard again,—
If all were love.

If all were love, a thousand ills
That happen now would cease,
And o'er all lands and seas would
brood
The white-winged dove of peace,—
If all were love.

If all were love, the brotherhood
Of man would be complete,
And angels from yon starry realms
Again our earth would greet,—
If all were love.

If all were love, this wondrous globe
An Eden still would be,
And walking in the cool of day,
Man would his Maker see,—
If all were love.

FREDERICK TUNBRIDGE.

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Our thanks are presented to all our friends.

TO OUR READERS.

N.B.—We wish to remind our readers that subscriptions for the *Journal* for 1918 should be paid in advance (2/- per annum, post free), and that great labour in the office would be saved if our friends would send at once without waiting for notice to the Secretary :—*Rev. Harold C. Morton, B.A., 24 Carlisle Terrace, The Hoe, Plymouth.* We also call attention to the fact that the 2/- does not cover the cost, and the Committee will be thankful for donations or subscriptions to the funds of the Wesley Bible Union.

On May 1st, Mr. John Duxbury will give Recitals at the Temperance Hall, Huddersfield, in aid of the Funds of the Wesley Bible Union. A Stall for the Sale of Useful and Fancy Articles will be open in connection with these gatherings. If any of our friends would send goods or money for the Sale, these would be gratefully received by *Miss Bennetts, Wesley Manse, Norman Park, Huddersfield.*

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The Alternatives for Methodism.

REV. HAROLD C. MORTON, B.A.

It is now generally admitted that there are great departures from the Faith, as expressed in our Standards of Doctrine, throughout the ranks of Wesleyan Methodism. Among the Ministry this is probably truer than it is among the Laity; but the falling away cannot be disputed even among the Laity, and even where there has so far been no serious loss of the truth, it is clear that there is a carelessness about the whole question which reveals decadence and a preparation of the soil for all sorts of deadly errors to take root. There has, during the last year, been a change in that one respect mentioned above, viz., that there is now no hesitation in admitting the falling away from our Standards of Doctrine; though up till now it has been so stoutly denied. That may be a moral advance, but on the other hand it may indeed be a further step downward: for the vital question

is this—Is there any intention of dealing with those who are now admittedly not in harmony with the Doctrinal Standards to which they are pledged? To the following question, therefore, I want to offer an answer:—What are the courses that are now open to the Wesleyan Methodist Church?

The first course, and the good course, is the one which we have consistently advocated in this Journal. Those who no longer hold the truths, the belief of which was the condition of their entry into the ranks of the ministry or into the lay offices of the Church, have the plain duty before them of retiring from positions which they can no longer hold with moral usefulness and honour. This would mean a great loss of man-power and woman-power, and in many ways it is indisputable that Wesleyan Methodism would face the largest exodus she has ever experienced. It would not be a "split"—and those who think the supreme evil is summed up in that word will be comforted because a "split" is avoided—but it would be a great purification from elements which, however full of other excellencies, are alien to the genius and calling of Wesleyan Methodism. But it would be something more than this. It would be a return of Wesleyan Methodism to the simplicity and singleness of aim and purpose, to the directness, force, passion and power of her early days. It would be more than this. To-day there is no Church worthy to be called an Evangelical and Scriptural Church. There is no Church free from the taint of scepticism, of rationalistic criticism of the Scriptures, of questioning concerning the supernatural, and of equivocal statements concerning our Divine Lord. England's greatest need is unsupplied. England needs more than anything else a true Bible Christian Church, a Church whose passion it is to spread not holiness according to the ideas of the new theologian, but Scriptural holiness throughout the land. The deterioration of the moral and spiritual life of our land is to be traced to that unsupplied need more than to any other thing. Upon Wesleyan Methodism lies the burden more than upon any other Church, inasmuch as God committed this high privilege to her when He saw the need for a new Church and therefore created her: and Wesleyan Methodism's criticism of the Scriptures and tolerance of the criticism of the Scriptures has involved her in a deep shadow of guilt.

What England needs to-day is a truly Scriptural Evangelical Church. Indeed the future of Evangelical Christianity in England depends upon the creation of such a Church. That God will allow the favoured land of England to long suffer from this want is not at all likely. He will raise up a new Church again and commit to it the great evangel of His Unerring Word. Such a purification of Wesleyan Methodism from the alien elements, which are ruining her life to-day and robbing her of all chance of the effective performance of her mission, would mean that Wesleyan Methodism offers herself once more to God. With unspeakable pain she would prepare herself to receive from God a renewal of her commission. I believe that God would receive her, renew her commission, and rapidly make her the most numerous Church and the mightiest influence in our native land. From all the other Churches many of the best and most earnest people would flock to her Standards. Evangelical Christians, who are everywhere despairing of their Churches because of the very same influences which are wrecking the life and prospects of Wesleyan Methodism, would realise that God was raising for them a new fellowship and giving to England the priceless treasure of a truly Biblical Church once more. Methodism would reclaim her lost destiny and find that for a second time her dawning had begun.

Such a course, then, would not be a catastrophe but an unspeakable blessing to the Wesleyan Church and to the country. Those who were obliged to leave her borders would find amid the numerous Churches of our land some new and more suitable fellowship. They would be happier and more useful; and though greatly missed in many ways, neither side, however they sorrowed, would ever have cause to repent of a step which put them right where to-day they are so manifestly wrong.

The *second course* open to Wesleyan Methodism is this—to recognise that there are great departures from the Faith; to say that it is impossible to remedy this state of things; to resolve to become an “inclusive Church,” retaining within our borders many divergencies and contradictions of belief; to apply therefore to Parliament for the alteration of the Model Deed and of all Trusts which are settled upon that basis; to alter the Ordination Service; to abolish the May question to Ministers, “Does he believe and preach our

doctrines?"; and equally to abolish the safeguards which hedge round the appointment of our Lay office-holders. We should thus preserve our probity even though at the expense of our unity. For Connexionalism would become quite impossible. It is most difficult now. The contradictions of teaching to which our congregations are subjected already are grievous in the extreme. Some of our people grieve deeply over it, and we may be sure that our Divine Lord grieves far more. But when to preserve our honour as a Church we had abolished the safeguards which have undoubtedly restrained many and kept many alive to the Truth, the resulting chaos would render Connexionalism intolerable and impossible. Possibly we could become a more or less loosely attached body of Churches approximating more and more to the Congregational type, and with a fixed instead of an itinerant Ministry. But this course would mean in plain language that Wesleyan Methodism was resigning her commission; and many of her most earnest members would feel obliged to seek their home elsewhere.

The *third course*, which I hesitate to call "open," because it is morally unjustifiable and only open in the same sense that it is possible, is to keep our Standards as they now are; to retain the Model Deed, and the basis of our separate Trusts, as they stand at present; to continue to demand that our Ministers at Ordination shall declare that the Doctrinal Standards, which are not administered but slighted and in many ways denied, are in accordance with the Scriptures; to continue to demand that every man at May shall declare that he believes and preaches the doctrines of those Standards, although everyone knows that many of them are departing from those doctrines; and for the sake of unity, an utterly false unity, a mere semblance of unity, to devise a formula, which taken in different senses by different people can be subscribed to by them all. The course would probably be something like this:—Retain the Standards, say that they are to be regarded as stating a *general type* of doctrine, that a general adhesion to that general type is still expected, but that the "living Church" has the right to modify all doctrines; and if the Church (not the individual) modifies the doctrines of the Standards then the individual Minister or Layman may affirm that he accepts the Standards, while at the same time

in his own mind he means that he accepts the Standards as modified by resolutions of the Church. Thus the Standards mean one thing to one mind which accepts the Standards in their plain Scriptural meaning, and another thing to another mind which accepts them as modified by the "living Church." A Church which goes upon these lines will almost certainly soon be a dying Church, and the more eagerly it claims that being alive it has the right to modify the teachings which have been committed to it, the more quickly will it pass into a dead and forsaken condition. It becomes easier for us to appreciate the temptations to which the Roman Church so fatally succumbed, when we see how clever minds can produce formulae which submerge all differences and allow those who subscribe them full liberty to go as they please. Such a course as this smoothes the path for human feet and blocks the way for God.

If such a course as this is taken there are many who will be obliged to leave Wesleyan Methodism. For this course simply means that a free field will be given to the majority to modify the teachings of the Standards in accordance with their own views. Almost every modification which individuals or parties are advocating to-day is a contradiction of the doctrines of the Standards and not in the true sense a modification at all. And this is certain to be the case since the Standards are a very faithful statement, mainly in Biblical language, of some of the plainest teachings of the Scriptures, and no one can modify them without departing from the plain teaching of Scripture.

Should such a course as this be taken by the Conference the alternatives for faithful Christians would be very clear. On the one hand they would be able to preserve their faith by retiring from the Church which embarked upon such an unworthy course. For *covering up a mass of contradictory doctrine* under the cloak of a loose formula is not finding a basis of union; and *pretending that a basis is found* is not a course for the Church of God, which should be the pillar and ground of the Truth.

On the other hand, faithful Christians might stay in the Wesleyan Church to fight, and seek even yet to retrieve the day. *In that case the stage has been reached in which the only hope of effectively contending for the Faith would be to appeal to the Courts of Law.*

The Longevity of the Patriarchs in the Light of Modern Science.

REV. D. GATH WHITLEY.

The Longevity of the earliest men as recorded in the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis has not only been disbelieved by the Higher Critics, but has raised their ridicule.

"It is absolutely impossible" they say "that men can ever have lived 600, 700, or 800 years upon the Earth. Science utterly overthrows such an idea. Such long lives are ridiculous, and could never have taken place."

We shall examine these confident assertions in the light of modern Science, and recent discovery.

First of all, it is a fact that men in recent times have lived through nearly the whole of two centuries. Thomas Parr—commonly called "Old Parr"—lived in the reign of ten sovereigns, and died in 1635 aged 152 years. He married his second wife when he was 120 years old. Henry Jenkins died a little later at the age of 169, and a native of Poland is known to have lived more than 170 years. What have the Higher Critics to say to these well known facts?

They reply that the Science of Biology forbids us to believe that it is possible for men to live now 500 or 600 years. In reply to this we produce the testimony of Weismann, who has been held to be the greatest Biologist in Germany. He states that he can find no reason from Science why living beings—apart from violence or accident—should die at all! He declares that some of the lower animals *do not die*, and he uses these startling words—"From a physiological point of view we might admit that we can see no reason why the functions of the organism should ever cease," and he also says—"Death, *i.e.* the end of life, is by no means, as is usually assumed, an attribute of all organisms. An immense number of low organisms do not die, although they are easily destroyed, being killed by heat, poisons, etc." It is interesting to note also that some animals such as whales and elephants live more than 200 years. Trees live longer. The great dragon-tree at Orotava in the island of Teneriffe was perhaps the oldest tree in the world. Precise accounts

have been handed down to us of its size and character, and many drawings have been made of it. The talented German scientist Humboldt declared that this tree was 6000 years old ! Unfortunately it was blown down in the autumn of 1867 and entirely destroyed. The Yew tree of Braburn in Kent was (according to the celebrated botanist De Candolle) 3000 years old, and the Yews at Fortingal in Perthshire had an age of from 2500 to 3000 years. Why then should it be thought impossible that Man should live 900 years ?

When it is said also, that because Man cannot live 600 years *now*, therefore it is impossible that *long ago* he should have attained that age, a strange fallacy in reasoning is committed. A man who is 80 years old says that in the days of his youth he could walk 30 miles in a day, but now he can only walk 5 miles in a day. A Higher Critic immediately says that because the old man can only walk 5 miles *now* in a day, therefore he could *never* have walked more than that distance in former days. The reply of course is, that when the man walked 30 miles in a day he was *young* and therefore *strong* and full of superabundant vitality, but now he is *old* and feeble. It is exactly the same with the Human Race. Men do not live *now* more than 100 years because the Human Race is feeble, and is becoming worn out through disease and self-indulgence. It is a remarkable thing that there is a tradition amongst many ancient nations, that in the early ages of the Human Race men lived to an enormous age. The Greeks, the Illyrians, the ancestors of the ancient Hindoos, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians, all believed that in ancient times men lived for hundreds of years. In proof of this, Josephus—the well known historian of the Jews—says—"I have the testimony of all those among the Greeks and the Romans who wrote on antiquities. For Manetho, who composed the annals of Egypt ; Berosus, who collected the Chaldean traditions ; Moëchus, Hestiaios, and also Hieronymus the Egyptian, the authors of Phœnician histories, are fully in accord with what I say. Hesiod, Hecataeus, Hellanicos, Acousildos, as well as Ephorus and Nicolas (of Damascus), every one relate that men of antiquity lived 1000 years."

In ancient Egypt before the days of Abraham 110 years was held to be the perfect life of Man, and an inscription has been found written in those days in which an Egyptian author

states that he was 110 years old, when he wrote his book. If in ancient Egypt therefore, men did not reach the *prime* and *perfection* of life until they were 110 years old, it is quite certain they did not die, as a rule, until they were nearly 200 years old.

On the longevity of the Patriarchs therefore, the Science of History strongly supports the Bible.

Prehistoric Archæology gives a similar testimony, concerning the Antediluvians. The most ancient men that Science brings before us are those who lived in Western Europe with the lion, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus. These men lived in the Early Stone-Age or Palæolithic Period. Let us see what they were like. They were tall, rough, and strong with massive skeletons, which gave strong proof of extreme longevity. Let us hear what Sir William Dawson has to say about them. But first let us consider the brilliant scientific character of the speaker. Sir William Dawson was the most talented geologist in Canada, also President of MacGill's College in Montreal, Fellow of the Royal Society of Great Britain, and President of the British Association of Science in 1886. These are the highest scientific honours that England can give. Speaking of the skeletons of these earliest men he says—"Another point which strikes us in reading the description of these skeletons is the indication which they seem to present of an extreme longevity. The massive proportions of the body, the great development of the muscular processes, the extreme wearing of the teeth among a people who predominantly lived on flesh and not on grain, the obliteration of the sutures of the skull, along with indications of slow ossification of the ends of the long bones, point in this direction, and seem to indicate a slow maturity and a great length of life in this most primitive race."¹

Now let us turn to Geology, and we shall find that it gives indirect testimony of a remarkable kind, in favour of the longevity of the earliest men.

Geology teaches us that the earliest members of the different races of plants and animals, were immensely larger and may possibly have lived longer than any that are now living. Let us take a few examples. The longest terrestrial lizards that now live are only 3 or 4 feet in length. But the earliest lizards that lived at the beginning of the race were often more than *twenty times* larger. Thus, the *Brontosaurus*

1 The Meeting Place of Geology and History, pp. 62, 63.

and the *Atlantosaurus*—whose skeletons have been found in America—were respectively, 80 and 100 feet in length! Again; take the case of flying lizards. At the present time the only flying lizard is the *Draco volans* of South East Asia, the spread of whose wings is less than 6 inches. But the earliest flying reptiles which were called *Pterodactyles* were vastly larger, for the spread of their wings was often from 25 to 30 feet! Once more; as to sea-serpents. The only serpents in the sea now known, are those which swim in the Indian Ocean, and which are little more than 5 or 6 feet in length. But in the early days of the reptile race, which Geology has revealed to us, the serpents in the sea were enormously larger. The great sea-serpent called the *Mosasaurus* was 75 feet in length, while the *Clidastes* was still larger, and attained the astonishing length of 120 feet! The skeletons of these monsters of the Ocean, have been found in America, and have been carefully measured.

The changes revealed by geology in the character and magnitude of animals suggest that there may not impossibly have been similar changes in the matter of length of life. At all events there is no scientific improbability that in the early stages of the Human Race there may have been a much longer duration of life, and this is increased by the fact that we can see tendencies to reduce the term of life, arising out of the artificial methods of living invented by human civilisations.

We have now produced the testimony of *four* sciences to show that the extreme longevity of the Patriarchs is in harmony with the teachings of Science. Namely (1) Biology, (2) History, (3) Prehistoric Archæology, (4) Geology.

What have the Higher Critics to say, concerning the verdict of Science on this question?

Notes.

A Delightful Story of Queen Mary.

Some time ago our honoured friend Mr. Thomas Hogben—a member of the Wesley Bible Union—published in the "One by One" magazine a letter from a correspondent, of very great interest not only because of the especial fact which the writer desired to bring to notice, but because of the delightful story of our very gracious Queen which the writer recalls. It has aroused so much interest that we give here the letter in full from the pages of "One by One." The worker with whom the Queen conversed was Frederick Arnot, a great missionary traveller in Central Africa. The letter is as follows:—

"I wish to send you the following sequel of an incident recorded in one of your recent quarterly magazines. You mentioned a conversation which Queen Mary had with a certain Christian worker about his work—of his asking her if she herself was a Christian, to which she replied, 'Do you mean, am I converted?' He said, 'Yes.' She said, 'I am, and it was through reading a booklet called 'Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment,' and I have since been distributing this booklet."

"In speaking a few days ago to a lady who had given a copy of this booklet to a relative of mine, I said, 'Do you know that that booklet was the means of converting the Queen?' To which she replied, 'I sent it to her.' She then produced a type-written letter, dated 'Sandringham, 28th November, 1905,' (which she had had framed), sent by Miss Knollys, acknowledging receipt by the Queen, the Princess, of my friend's letter, and thanking her for the pamphlets enclosed. This lady did not know what was the result of her efforts of nearly eight years ago until I told her a few days ago of the above incident, as recorded in the "One by One" magazine. This lady, who is a zealous Christian worker on the 'one by one' principle, referred in her letter to the late Queen Victoria mentioning an incident in the life of the late Queen as showing her to be a Christian indeed, and that in my friend's estimation she went 'from glory to glory!' Truly God can do great things through His people when they are wholly devoted to His service."

The Last Days of Charles Darwin.

Much interest has been aroused by the article upon the last days of Charles Darwin, and Lady Hope's account of the return of the great scientist to the Faith of Jesus Christ. But the correspondence which has reached us is of a two-fold character, and we think it is due to our readers, as well as to the friends of Mr. Darwin, that we should give some statement showing its drift. One correspondent forwards to us a copy of a letter from Sir Francis Darwin, the son of Charles Darwin, denying that his father experienced any such change of view. The letter at all events makes it clear that if any such change took place, Sir Francis Darwin was in ignorance of it. One of our most highly esteemed members in Canada has also written saying that in his judgment there is grave reason for questioning the correctness of the account which has been given. On the other hand it is quite incredible that such an account should have been written without good warrant. The statement regarding the famous evolutionist was so startling and so utterly unexpected, that it is difficult to perceive how it could have come into being at all unless facts, which are admittedly so much stronger than fiction, were the basis and origin of it all. There is a good deal that might be said concerning the denial of Sir Francis Darwin that any such change had occurred. A father is not very likely to make a confident of a son unless there is upon the very matter of personal faith in Christ and the Scriptures the closest fellowship between them.

Our contributor, Mr. Maurice Gregory, has been communicated with and is making further enquiries. Meantime the following facts about Lady Hope may be of interest to our readers and may help them to come to an opinion on the probabilities of the case. She is well known in Christian and philanthropic circles on both sides of the Atlantic.

"She is the biographer of her father, the late Sir Arthur Cotton, the celebrated Indian statesman, administrator and philanthropist, who was the co-adjutor of John Bright and many others in matters concerning the welfare of India. Sir Arthur was a convinced and outspoken opponent of the Indo-Chinese Opium Traffic at a time when it was extremely unpopular to take that position in the official circles to which he belonged. As an administrator he was the great pioneer of vast schemes of irrigation. He was a friend of General Gordon and Livingstone, and many other well-known lovers of their kind. The concluding chapter of his biography (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1900), has a very beautiful description by Lady Hope of the "eventide of light and peace" of her father. She says "After his frugal dinner, he would sit in the drawing room with us, his eyes fixed on the pages of a Bible, in very small print, which he delighted in reading. Owing to his deafness, the conversation around him was no interruption to his thoughts; he would sit perfectly

absorbed in the subject before him, sometimes a smile lighting up his face, sometimes with an expression of intense thought as he searched deeply into the Word. One of us said to him one evening: "You seem very fond of your Bible; I do not think you ever get tired of it." His reply, raising his hand with one of his impressive gestures, was: "I feel like a little child playing on the margin of a lake; all my life I have been studying this book, and I seem hardly to have touched it yet. There are such depths and heights beyond all that I have ever seen or known." The daughter and life-long companion of such a man was surely a Divinely prepared recipient of the spiritual confidences of the "eventide of light and peace" of Charles Darwin!"

Methodism's Time of Visitation.

That this period through which we are passing is Methodism's time of visitation is a thought which we see increasing need to impress upon the readers of this Journal. For more than four years a small band of men and women have plainly and fearlessly voiced the protest of true Methodism against modern departures from the faith. There has been no fear and there has been no favour. Whether the offenders have been well-known and popular men or men of a more quiet and retired way of life, if they have taught error, such steps as are open and feasible have been taken to rebuke, warn, and stop them. It is, of course, only when there is only documentary proof of erroneous teaching that charges have been laid, and the cases in which such proof have been available have been but one in a hundred of the cases in which serious error has been uttered and the souls of men brought into peril. This has meant that anything approaching effective action has been possible only in a very small fraction of the cases in which such action ought to have been taken.

What is the reason for this state of things? It is really due to one cause, viz., that those who hear false teaching given, and who know of men who are leading their hearers away from the Methodist Faith, take no action against them. They are the only people who are able to take action. It is of very little use to report to us such cases, inasmuch as we have not heard the utterances which are condemned, albeit for our information it is important to write and tell us of these cases. In six cases, where printed matter furnished plain and direct proof that there was a need for charges, we have taken that course in these recent years. But it is those who have the proof who alone can take the action—and the fact that no one except ourselves has taken action at all against individual offenders has led to two evils. First, the offending teachers have been left to continue their course, and sometimes, we fear, to grow bolder because of their immunity; and secondly, the fact that we alone have taken action has caused the plea to be continually put forth that nothing very wrong can be in progress, because only a very small band have taken any action to stop the spread of the alleged errors.

A strong lead has been given to loyal Methodists, and there has been but the feeblest active response. This is Methodism's time of visitation, and the hand is moving on relentlessly toward the end of the appointed hour.

Going to Jerusalem.

It is a hard thing to do, this championing of the truth. To-day truth is easily flouted; but when the most challenging attacks are made upon it and the glove thrown down upon the floor of the Church by the occupant of the pulpit, it means a veritable "going to Jerusalem" to take up the challenge and defend the truth. Yet this is what must be done; and it must not be a mere protest—though that is seldom enough made—but the matter must be pressed. "Whose mouths must be stopped" is the word of

the apostle. "Now you have made your protest and your duty is at an end," the lukewarm are always saying; but our duty ends only when the error ends. Sometimes our relatives are our worst guides. We have to be very much on guard against the devil when he enters into our loving relatives. He can speak with a very persuasive voice through the lips of our mothers, wives, and aunts. Here is a reply made in such a case by one who felt called to action:—

"What sort of a course must a plain man follow when a *Church*—a *Church* the mystic body of Christ! you know the doctrine—faces east by south-west; 75 per cent. of its ministers on a recent estimate not accepting all its doctrines, and shadowing over the May sunshine with a solemn affirmation which in that case cannot be true?"

"You say to me: 'You have made your protest; now settle down into quiet fellowship again.' You are thinking of *me*. When I say, 'I must needs go up to Jerusalem,' you say, 'Far be it from you; this shall not be unto you.' I appreciate your love for me: but he that saveth his life shall lose it—LOSE IT! Honestly in this matter I have not thought of myself, but of the truth—or if of myself at all, then of *my* vows. This thing is life and death, and Time and Eternity, and Things Present and Things to Come. The only part of *me* that enters into this calculation legitimately is my vows, my responsibilities, my witness, my answer at the Day of His appearing. If the Faith is the heart of life's reality, as I believe we both agree, how can we settle down quietly into peaceful fellowship with those who depart from it, and deny it in this respect, and in that respect, and undermine it in their unbelief? It is said that when St. John saw Cerinthus in the Baths at Ephesus, he would not stay to bathe. 'Come away,' he said, 'Cerinthus is there, and the Baths may fall upon us.' And to-day, amid Methodist Conferences, where attacks on the Living Word and the Written Word are justified and defenders of the Faith angrily denounced, voices are saying: 'Come away! there are ministers there who say that the Light of the World Himself was mistaken. Come away, lest the falling roof crush those who are guilty of such blasphemy.'

"But you say: 'Are you certain you are right? for these men are so spiritual.' I wonder what 'spiritual' really means here? The Moslem Sufis are 'spiritual,' but deep in error. A Buddhist is very spiritual, or a 'Christian Scientist,' or a Spiritualist himself—but that does not assure their truth. Our test is first, the Bible, and next honesty. These men make a false affirmation in May. Also, I am personally quite certain (one has to be certain *for himself*) that Wesley was right and those who dispute his teachings are wrong, because such disputers are not in harmony with the Bible. Indeed these spiritual men say that the Bible has many mistakes, and even our Lord His share. Would not Christ our Lord say to you and me: 'Yea, and why even of yourselves judge YE not what is right?'"

Many times we have been told that the Modernists are "spiritual," and it has become perfectly plain that "spirituality" is no barrier to the inroads of error. *There is need of the combination of the spiritual mind and the Bible to guide it.*

The Ritual Movement in Nonconformity.

We drew our readers' attention some months ago to the way in which ritualistic practices are making their appearance within the Nonconformist Churches, especially recounting Dr. Orchard's mimicry of the Roman Mass. We called attention to the strange fact that Dr. Orchard is also an advanced "new theologian." The alliance between mediævalism and modernism is worthy of note. In such ways it is that deep-lying and subtle influences make their presence felt. They work upwards and outwards in apparently contradictory but really kindred ways. The deep root in this case is probably the exaltation of the human; which sometimes shows itself in the vast claims put forth on behalf of the priesthood, claims which usurp the very throne of God: sometimes in the enormous claim that the human intellect is able to judge for itself what to accept and what to reject in the Scriptures, and even in the teachings of our Lord Himself: sometimes, as in Dr. Orchard's case, in both ways at once.

From Derby we hear of a similar instance. At a meeting of the Free Churches there, a Congregational Minister, Rev. J. R. Ackroyd, is reported in the local press to have declared that

"the Churches were carrying too much deck cargo, and should show men that they judged everything, even the Bible itself, by the knowledge of God that had come to them through Jesus Christ. They were going to make it difficult for the men coming back from the war if they placed in the forefront of their message such non-essential questions as the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the Atonement, which were formulations of Christian belief that could only arise properly out of a definite Christian experience. They would raise a barrier by making Christianity chiefly an appeal to intellect instead of to man as a moral being.

Contending that there was much in the Bible that was not relevant to Christian faith, and very much that was in direct antagonism to it, he urged that Jonah and the whale and like stories, together with the imprecatory Psalms, should be cleared out of the way, so that they might no longer possess the minds of men, so far as the value of the Bible was concerned. There should be a clear and definite pronouncement that the Churches did not carry on those things as part of their tradition. Mr. Ackroyd also advised a revision of the methods of worship, his opinion being that they should not be afraid of either ceremonial or symbol."

Here again is the significant union of extreme "higher criticism" and a budding ritualism.

Rome and the Nonconformist Churches.

That these and similar straws are showing Romanists which way the wind is blowing is revealed by little noticed happenings of these excited days. Cardinal Bourne's address to the English people contained, among many things which are exaggerated and erroneous, particularly in his history, the very true remark that War Shrines with their crucifixes and prayers for the dead are familiarising the English public with the ideas which our wise forefathers banished at such cost and such toil at the time of the Reformation. A correspondent calls our attention to the fact that in her meetings Rome has at all events begun to consider what she can do to hasten the movement away from Primitive Christianity and down to Mediævalism on the part of restless Free Churchmen. Mr. W. B. Luke, J.P., himself a wanderer from the Evangelical and Nonconformist fold, went up to Liverpool some little time ago, it seems, to address the Catholic Society of the University of Liverpool on the Nonconformist attitude toward Catholicity. He seems to have spoken at great length, urging more attention to the Nonconformist half of English Christianity. Let Nonconformists be alert and watchful. The real chance of Rome in this country is that supposedly Protestant voices always loudly cry "Peace, Peace" whenever any earnest Christian tries to arouse his fellows to resist the quiet steady pressure exerted almost everywhere by one or other of the forces of clericalism.

Yet one would have thought that to-day of all days there would be alertness and care. For one of the outstanding facts of the war is this:—that all over the world the countries and provinces which are on good terms with the Vatican are either openly hostile or are cold and unconcerned in the conflict for freedom. Within our own Empire we have difficulties wherever Romanists are strong—in Ireland, in Australia, and in Quebec. Surely Free Churchmen are the last of Englishmen to be unobservant or forgetful of such facts as these.

The Foreign Office and the Roman See.

Meantime, through all the strange Germanism of the Pope, we have retained our Envoy at the Vatican. It is an outrage upon our national traditions, and an unworthy flouting of our Allies France and Italy, who are not in any such friendly relationships with the Pope. It is also a miserable

failure as a line of policy, as the Pope makes clear when he addresses any war document to the belligerents, inasmuch as he seems almost always to help our enemies. The failure is also clear from the fact alluded to above, that wherever the Vatican has influence, there our cause has difficulties to face.

Meantime, our Foreign Office remains in the hands of Roman Catholic officials, to a most disquieting degree, and it is not re-assuring to read in the "Evening Standard" some little time ago the following protest against the depressing influence of the Foreign Office in society circles:—

The Foreign Office has from time to time come under severe censure for its failures during the war. The Foreign Office is guilty of something more than blundering diplomacy. What should be sternly and ruthlessly eradicated is the atmosphere of pessimism which has prevailed in that office on and off ever since August, 1914.

The clerks and permanent officials may be pessimistic within the portals of the Foreign Office, though even that is bad; but for these men to go about spreading pessimistic ideas among their friends and acquaintances is a national crime. Only the other night at dinner one of these unworthy persons was holding forth in a really scandalous manner before a dozen men and women. Happily a military officer dropped hard and sharp on him, and he subsided. But he is not the only one; the talk of Foreign Office officials has approached very nearly a social scandal.

Mr. Balfour, who himself is calm and unperturbed, should undoubtedly look into this matter, and see that his subordinates keep their tongues in order and their hearts high, or replace them by more courageous men.

The Exploration of the Wesleyan Pulpit.

Some months ago we desired to ascertain what is actually being preached in Wesleyan pulpits, and especially to what extent the fundamental doctrines of our Church are being expounded to our people. We therefore enumerated the leading doctrines of our Standards and asked our readers to tell us how many of these doctrines they had heard expounded during the preceding six months. A considerable number sent in reports on the matter, and others promised to note the subjects and report after they had employed a few months in impartial observation. Unfortunately the Rev. Harold Morton has been away from home ill for some time past, but has now returned and will be glad to hear from those who have a report to make.

Perhaps it will be an advantage to recapitulate the chief doctrines which Wesley expounds in our Standards. They are:—

The unerring Word, *i.e.* the Scriptures.

Man's Origin and first Sinless Estate.

The Fall of Man.

The Total Depravity of Human Nature.

Universal Redemption, and Preventive Grace.

Atonement through the Blood of Christ.

Repentance, *i.e.* Self-knowledge and Conviction of Sin through the Preaching of the Law.

Salvation by Faith Alone.

The New Birth.

Assurance.

Entire Sanctification.

One Probation, and Two Alternatives, Heaven and Hell.

We hope very shortly to issue a Leaflet, containing a brief and typical quotation from the Standards upon each of these doctrines. Mr. Morton is also hoping that it will prove possible to issue a reprint in book form of his articles on "Messages that Made the Revival." Such a book should prove of real value to Wesleyans in enabling them to become familiar with the teachings of their own Church, and to perceive departures from the truth to which we are pledged.

To Our Members.

The Secretary presents his thanks to those who have already sent in their **SUBSCRIPTIONS** for 1918. He hopes that all who have not yet sent will very soon oblige him with their **SUBSCRIPTIONS**. The two shillings is not sufficient to meet all the demands made by the issue of the *Journal*, and this makes it all the more important that **SUBSCRIPTIONS** be in hand as early in the year as possible.

Special thanks are presented to all who have sent donations for the work in addition to the 2s. for the year's *Journal*. The Union needs funds for effective work, and the Committee hopes that all who are able will send in a special donation. This cause is second to none in the whole field of Wesleyan Methodism.

One of our members who recently sent in his subscription accompanied it with an extra 3s. "as a fine for not sending earlier."

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

No. XXVIII.

THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS AND MEANINGS OF FAITH.

BY REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

One of the most familiar and most frequently occurring words in Christian speech and experience is the word "Faith"; but both the word and the thing denoted by it have many aspects and meanings which, in order to clearness of thought, require to be carefully distinguished. The Greek word *pistis* is nearly always translated by the English "Faith"; and its verb *pisteuein* by "Believe." *Pistis* (and therefore Faith) has two leading senses: (1) Faithfulness, fidelity, good faith; and (2) Belief. In the A.V. of the Old Testament "faith" only occurs twice (Deut. 32²⁰; Hab. 2¹), in both of which it has the sense of "faithfulness or fidelity"; and elsewhere in the Old Testament the same word is rendered by "faithfulness," as in Psa. 37³ (R.V.); Deut. 32⁴ (R.V.); Isa. 11⁵, &c. Also in the New Testament it is used in the same sense: as in Matt. 23²³; Rom. 3³; Gal. 5²²; 1 Pet. 1⁵; Rev. 2¹⁹,* and other places. But what chiefly concerns us here is the use of the word in its sense of "belief," because this has many varieties.

I.—BELIEF IN GOD. In Heb. 11⁶ faith is belief in the existence and benevolence of God. In James 2¹⁴⁻²⁶, where faith is contrasted with works, it means "belief in God": the belief that "God is one." He regards faith in the sense of mere assent of the mind, and says that intellectual assent is possessed by devils (2¹⁹); and asserts that mere belief is worthless unless accompanied by conduct in harmony with it. Mere belief is "dead faith." Paul and James mean different things by faith. With Paul, too, it meant belief in God, but also much more. He likewise would say that faith must be proved by action, and that a believer who has experienced the great change that true faith brings could not do other than try to live as Christ would have

* Query. It is open to question whether in 1 Pet. 1,5 and Rev. ii.19 *pistis* does not mean *faith* in the sense of *trustfulness*.—EDS.

him live. There is no real antithesis between faith and works in themselves: works are the evidence of faith, and faith has its necessary outcome in works. The real antithesis is between earning salvation by works, and receiving it as a free gift of God. The teaching of James was not directed against Paul, but probably against distorted reports of Paul's teaching by others; for it is evident that Paul's teaching was sometimes misunderstood and perverted (Rom. 6^{1, 16}; Gal. 1⁶⁻⁹).

II.—BELIEF IN THE PROMISES OF GOD. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the distinctive sense of faith is belief in the fulfilment of God's promises: a firm persuasion of that which is still future and unseen (Heb. 11¹). This meaning not only runs through chap. 11, but is predominant in other parts of the epistle where the word faith is used (4^{1, 2}, 10^{22, 23}, 12²). In Jas. 1⁶, 5¹⁶ "the prayer of faith" means faith that God will grant what is prayed for. St. Paul does not use faith with respect to promises the fulfilment of which is still future. For this he prefers "hope" (Rom. 8^{24, 25}); although he does use faith in describing the confidence of Old Testament saints in the fulfilment of particular promises: as of Abraham in Rom. 4.

III.—BELIEF IN THE WORD OR POWER OF CHRIST. This sense is most common in the first three Gospels. Faith there is usually a belief in the miracle-working power of Christ: a belief that expected help and relief by means of miracles (Mk. 5³⁴, 10⁵²). The effect of the miracle was usually proportioned to the strength of this belief (Matt. 8¹³, 9²⁹, 15²⁸). Faith there is also the confidence of the disciple that he can exercise the same miracle-working power when it is conferred upon him (Mk. 11²²⁻²⁴). Faith in the sense of belief in the performance of miracles is also found in the Acts: as in 3¹⁶, 14⁹.

IV.—BELIEF IN CHRIST HIMSELF. There was a faith in Jesus which was real so far as it went, but not sufficient for true discipleship since it merely attached itself to His power, and failed to recognise His character and spiritual aims (John 2²³, 6¹⁴, 7³¹, 8³⁰, 11⁴⁵, 12¹¹). Beyond belief in His message and work He claimed an unparalleled faith in Himself. For those who in this complete sense received Him and "believed on His name" faith acquired a new meaning. It signified a unique attachment that gathered round the Person of Jesus. He regarded His death as the culmination of His mission (Matt. 20²⁸, 26²⁸; Luke 9³¹, 12⁵⁰; John 3¹⁴, 12^{23, 24}); and having centred the faith of men upon Himself He finally fastened that faith upon His death through which salvation comes to men. Taught by Him the Apostles understood and proclaimed their Master's death as the centre of the relation between God and men. "Believing in Him" meant above all else believing in that, and finding in the Cross deliverance from sin and realisation of God's saving purpose (Acts 3¹⁸, 20²⁸; 1 Cor. 1^{23, 24}; 1 Pet. 3¹⁸, &c.)

V.—THE SUM OF CHRISTIANITY. The word faith is frequently used in the sense of "The Faith": the total of belief and doctrine which is distinctive of Christian believers (Acts 6⁷, 13⁸, 14²², 16⁵, 24²⁴; Phil. 1²⁷; Jas. 1³, 2¹). In Acts 14²⁷ "the door of faith" means an opening for the introduction and spread of this faith. In Jude 3, 20 and Rev. 2⁴³ it has the concrete sense of a recognised body of belief representing the essential truths of Christianity.

VI.—TRUST AND RELIANCE. Amid these varied usages St. Paul's conception of faith stands out distinctively. It rises to a higher level, and forms the climax of all the rest. But he also uses faith in these lower senses. There is scarcely one of them that is not represented in his epistles. In Rom. 3³ it clearly means "faithfulness." In Rom. 4 it is used for a faith like that of Abraham in the fulfilment of the promises of God; but he shows that Abraham's faith was not only a certain confidence in regard to particular promises but a standing attitude, an abiding faith in God which formed the key-note of his character. He also uses faith to denote the general acceptance and profession of Christianity (Rom. 1⁵, 10^{8, 17}, 16²⁶). But with him faith reaches a higher form of which the centre and spring is an exalted "faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3^{22, 26}). This with him is the crowning, characteristic sense which he always has in view when he ascribes to faith the mighty efficacy that he constantly does ascribe to it (Rom. 5¹, &c.). It is not merely assent or adhesion, but enthusiastic and intensely personal adhesion: the highest and most effective motive power of which human character is capable (Gal. 2²⁰). The object of saving faith is always a Person, and that Person is Christ (John 3³⁶, 14¹; Rom. 3²²; Gal. 2¹⁶, 3²⁶; 2 Tim. 1¹²). Thus St. Paul's view of faith rises from mere belief to the loftier idea of "trust" and reliance of which he expressly speaks in such passages as 2 Cor. 1⁹; Eph. 1^{12, 13}; 1 Tim. 4¹⁰, although he there describes it by another word. But in one emphatic passage (2 Tim. 1¹²) where he uses the word for faith, "I know whom I have believed," the margin reads: "Whom I have trusted." Paul's exalted view of faith was the outcome of what he had proved it to be to himself in his own experience, beginning from the moment of his vision of the Living Lord on the way to Damascus. It is a spiritual apprehension joined with personal reliance and trust: "believing with the heart" (Rom. 10^{9, 10}). Saving faith is both passive and active. As passive or receptive it is that trust or repose of the heart on Christ which in the New Testament is opposed to dependence on works of any kind (Rom. 4⁵). As active it is the energy that surrenders the soul to Christ and deliberately receives Him in return. In John 1¹² those who "believe on His name," and "as many as receive Him" are the same. "As passive and receptive faith makes the whole soul empty for the reception of Christ; as active and energetic it puts forth all its power to embrace Him and His salvation. It appropriates to itself the virtue of Christ's merit; apprehends Him and His atonement, and by ascribing all to Him it receives all from Him."

VII.—METHODIST TEACHING. Methodist teaching is true to this highest aspect of faith both in its Theology and Hymnology; abounding in such declarations as these: "Saving faith is not merely a divine evidence or conviction that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself; but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for my sins, that He loved me, and gave Himself for me." It is "such a belief of the Gospel as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, and to commit our souls into His hands in humble confidence in His ability and willingness to save us." It was the emphatic declaration of this highest form of faith that brought about the Reformation and the Methodist Revival; and it is this saving faith that we still need to teach and proclaim with our primitive simplicity and fervour.

Paul's use of Habakkuk ii. 4.

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

In the commencement of the article by Mr. Backhouse he refers to the passage Hab. 2⁴ "*The just shall live by his faith*," a passage which is thrice quoted in the New Testament in support of the doctrine of salvation by faith (Rom. 1¹⁷; Gal. 3¹¹; Heb. 10³⁸). Modernist critics are accustomed to refer to this quotation as a misrepresentation of the proper meaning of Habakkuk. It is so characterized by the Rev. George Jackson and others who speak of Paul's misquotations of the Old Testament. They insist that the word *emunah* which is translated "faith" in the passage in Habakkuk by the lxx., a translation followed both in the A.V. and R.V., means "*faithfulness*." A Legalist might say: "It is, therefore, plain that this passage makes for the doctrine of justification by works—by the work of fidelity—not of justification by faith; it is therefore misused by Paul." Instead of regarding the quotation as a misrepresentation of Scripture I regard this criticism as a specimen of the superficiality, shallowness, and incapacity for apprehending the true meaning of Scripture which generally characterizes the Bible exposition of pedantic grammarians and lexicographers. They chop up the great Bible words in the saw-mill of mere discussions of the etymologies of words and structure of sentences, and the life-blood of the literature flows away while they are occupied with their processes of dissection. Exegetes whose only apparatus of exposition is lexicon and grammar know nothing of the true meaning of Scripture. Carlyle has given us the true title for a pedant of this school—*Dr. Dryasdust*. These mere scholastics make a dictionary-definition of the meaning of a word, and think they are expositors when they try to pin their readers to this unchangeable definition. They are ignorant of the fact that words in composition are like the chemical elements when they enter into combination and lose their independent characteristics as elements when they combine with other elements to form a new chemical compound. It is only in scientific treatises that words retain a definite unchangeable meaning, and even here it is only chosen technical terms that do so.

Biblical commentators have done immeasurable damage to truth by treating the Bible as if its terms were intended to be interpreted with the inflexible rigidity of a mathematical treatise. One of the chief things to be remembered about the Bible is that it is not a book of scholastics written from the point of view of the theological student; but that it is, as Dr. Parker so aptly called it, "*The People's Bible*," a popular book directed to the man in the street, set forth in the language of the home, the market-place, the street, and the social circle, but never approaching the dialect of the pedantic scholar. In books of this class the expositor needs always to remember that a word never retains a rigidly inflexible meaning, but has a different meaning in every new context in which it is found. Professor Arthur Bell, the famous elocutionist, used to teach his students that, properly understood, all the words in a sentence constitute but one word, and if by the tones of their voice they isolate any word, they let the meaning of the sentence leak away; that no reading is correct which does not carry into every word the circulation of the life-blood of the thought of the sentence. What is true of reading is true of exegesis. No word must be cut off from its fellows by dictionary-definition, but must throb with the life-thought of its context.

Words in literature differ materially from those rigid immovable fragments, the technical terms that abound in treatises of science and philosophy. These technical terms refuse to flow on with the stream of thought and speech in the midst of which they stand. There they are like boulders in the flowing stream and the waters swirl and gurgle around them but these unchangeable terms never coalesce with their surroundings. In composition that is worthy to be called literature, in which the leading thought rules the whole discourse and moulds it to its purpose, the words cease to be separate atoms partitioned off from each other by dictionary-definitions, but they melt into each other like drops in a river, and you cannot separate them. In writing of this kind each word is governed not by its own meaning but by the controlling idea of which it forms part-expression. Consequently in literature the context gives to each word a meaning with a different hue from that which it has in any other context. Words in real literature are like chameleons that take the colour of the platform on which they stand.

Here I cannot help saying by the way that one of the greatest defects of the Revised Version arises from the absurd attempt to render the same Hebrew or Greek word by one English word, regardless of the shades of meaning which a new context confers upon the word. No word in any language ever exactly reproduces a word in another, and what I would call contextual transformations of words often call for a great change in the word by which the translation ought to represent them. This pedantic effort to polarize the meaning of Hebrew and Greek words by attaching them too much to a particular English word has so deformed the Revised Version that I think, on the whole, the accurate meaning of the original is better expressed by the more idiomatic Authorized Version that more effectively turns the Hebrew and Greek into the phraseology in which the average Englishman would express the thought of the original text. A free translation is often more accurate than the translation in buckram of the rigid grammarian or philologist.

These general remarks on composition have a direct bearing on the impudent criticism of those who dare to attribute misrepresentation to Paul's quotation of Hab. 2⁴.

I always want to ask them: Pray, sir, which is the more likely to know Hebrew better, you or Paul?

Now we turn to an examination of Paul's use of the passage in question. In order to see what Paul means it is necessary to have before us the immediate context which reads thus: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what He will say unto me and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And Jehovah answered me and said: Write the vision and make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faithfulness." (Hab. 2¹⁻⁴).

I maintain that Paul's quotation when read in this context is not a misrepresentation of the significance of the passage; is not an awkward and ill-chosen quotation, but is one that displays profound insight and masterly skill in argument. In Rom. 1¹⁷ he uses it as shewing that true righteousness is "revealed from faith to faith." In Gal. 3¹¹ he uses it to

shew the difference between true righteousness and legalist righteousness. In Heb. 10³⁸ the writer, whom I believe to be either Paul himself or a deputy of Paul speaking as his mouthpiece, uses it to describe the secret of perseverance in righteousness. Now what Habakkuk says is that faithfulness is the secret of the just man's life. The root of the Hebrew word *emunah* (*faithfulness*) is *aman* (the root of the word *amen*) which means *to prop up, to support*. Hence *faithfulness* denotes that it is virtue that *rests upon something*. If it is said that a man is faithful, the question arises, *Faithful to what?* or *Faithful to whom?* If a Legalist says that this sentence of Habakkuk declares that a man is saved by the merit of his faithfulness, Paul's answer is: "No, you must remember that faithfulness looks away to the person or thing which is the object of the faithfulness." In the particular place in Habakkuk the declaration is that the self-righteous man who is puffed up with a vain conceit of his own self-righteousness will perish, but the man who will live is the man who will be faithful to the vision which Habakkuk was commanded to write on the tables. From this it is manifest that the passage really means that the salvation of the just depends on his faith in the Divine message contained in the vision which Habakkuk was commanded to write. Paul, therefore, was unquestionably deducing the right inference from this Scripture, viz., that men are saved by trust in the grace of God as displayed in His revelation to man.

Those who scorn Paul's quotation are not only setting themselves up as having a better knowledge of Hebrew than Paul, but they are impugning the Rabbinical knowledge of the true significance of *emunah*, for Rabbins generally ascribe to it the same double meaning as our word "faith," viz., "*trustfulness*" as well as "*trustworthiness*." They also have to reckon with lxx. translation. We advise our readers to examine Bishop Lightfoot's excellent remarks on this passage in an extended note in his commentary on the Galatians; and we cannot refrain from quoting the following passage from Keil's commentary on Habakkuk.

It is indisputably evident from the context that our passage treats of the relation between man and God, since the words themselves speak of a waiting for the fulfilment of a promising oracle, which is to be preceded by a period of severe suffering. "What is more natural than that life or deliverance from destruction should be promised to that faith which adheres faithfully to God, holds fast by the word of promise,

and confidently waits for its fulfilment in the midst of tribulation? It is not the sincerity, trustworthiness, or integrity of the righteous man, regarded as being virtues in themselves, which are in danger of being shaken and giving way in such times of tribulation, but, as we may see in the case of the prophet himself is *faith*. To this therefore is appended the great promise expressed in the word *shall live*" (Delitzsch). And, in addition to this, *emunah* is opposed to the pride of the Chaldean, to his exaltation of himself above God; and for that very reason, it cannot denote integrity in itself, but simply some quality which has for its leading feature humble submission to God. The Jewish expositors, therefore, have unanimously retained this meaning here, and the lxx. have rendered the word quite correctly *pistis* (*faith*).

In his choice of this quotation Paul displayed masterly skill. The Modernist critics claim that Habakkuk's declaration appears to them to be the very opposite of the doctrine of justification by faith. Paul then does the most effective thing he could do in reply to a doctrine of salvation by works, when he demonstrates that a passage that on the surface is taken by those who claim high intelligence to be an assertion of salvation by human righteousness, in reality is based upon the doctrine that it depends upon faithful reliance on the saving mercy of God as set forth in the message of His redeeming grace.

Further, I claim that this quotation, so insolently assailed by superficial Rationalism, is a lesson given to us by the Holy Ghost through His inspired apostle concerning the true methods of Biblical interpretation, for we are taught to dig below the surface in order to discover the full significance of the word of God. The Holy Ghost thus teaches us to go to the roots of things. He demonstrates to us that the virtue of faithfulness is grounded in faith. The very word **FAITH**-fulness ought to suggest this to us immediately. The supreme value of faithfulness lies in the God towards whom our faith is directed, and in the **GRACE** which that faith embraces. Addison used to say that the greatest fault in style is obviousness; that if a writer said all he had to say in obvious truisms which lie upon the surface, there really was no reason why he should say them. This is true also of religious teaching. Paul shewed his wisdom and his skill by sustaining his statement by a quotation the applicability of which does not immediately appear, and which leads his readers on to seek for the hidden treasures of the wisdom of God. The Bible student will soon find that he will never touch bottom in his investigations in Holy Scripture. As he descends below the surface, he will find that each new dis-

covery will only prove the alphabet of richer revelations that will pour in upon him, and that the real Bible is not to be found in the obvious superficialities of a surface literalism but in those "deep things of God which the spirit searcheth," "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory," wisdom concerning which we are told that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2). To sum up the meaning of Hab. 2⁴, it is this: Righteousness is constituted by a faithfulness which is the opposite to the conduct of the self-sufficient man whose soul is lifted up in him and who sets his own judgment above the oracles of God, but is the conduct of one who submits himself in humble penitence to the vision which God has sent for his guidance. In the first instance that vision was the vision that Habakkuk was commanded to write on tables. Paul, therefore, is only fulfilling the prophecy of Habakkuk when he carries the principle forward to the faith that accepts God's full and final revelation of "all the fulness of the Godhead" (Col. 2⁹) in the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ, the vision of Habakkuk and all the other prophets being simply anticipatory of the revelation of God in the Gospel of His Son, in accordance with which the Holy Ghost has taught us that it was the Spirit of Christ that spake in all the prophets, and that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (1 Pet. 1¹¹; Rev. 19¹⁰). The difference between Paul and his critics is this: he understood Habakkuk; they, because their souls are lifted up in them, do not. What Habakkuk unmistakably says is:—*The key of righteousness and life is faith in the Divine Vision.*

John Wesley and the Bible.

When I began to make the Scriptures my chief study (about seven-and-twenty years ago) I began to see that Christians are called to love God with all their heart, and to serve Him with all their strength; which is precisely what I apprehend to be meant by the Scriptural term perfection. I build on no authority, ancient or modern, but the Scripture. If this supports any doctrine, it will stand; if not, the sooner

it falls the better. Neither the doctrine in question, nor any other is anything to me unless it be the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles.

John Wesley, Letter to Rev. Dr. Dodd, February, 1756.
Works, vol. xi., p. 449.

* * * * *

My ground is the Bible. Yea, I am a Bible-bigot. I follow it in all things, both great and small.

Part of an address at Dundee by John Wesley.
Journal, Standard Edition, vol v., p. 169.

* * * * *

I read Mr. Jenyns's admired tract on the *Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*. He is undoubtedly a fine writer, but whether he is a Christian, Deist, or Atheist I cannot tell. If he is a Christian he betrays his own cause by averring that "all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God, but the writers of it were sometimes left to themselves, and consequently made some mistakes." Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth.

John Wesley's *Journal, Standard Edition*, vol. vi., p. 117.

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Our thanks are presented to all our friends.

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No. 6.

JUNE, 1918.

Vol. V.

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The Eclipse of Nonconformity.

REV. HAROLD C. MORTON, B.A.

Were we to ask what was of all others the greatest crisis for English Nonconformity, throughout the whole course of its history, we should almost certainly be told, "The Ejection of 1662." That was at all events the most spectacular crises. During the Commonwealth there was for the first and only time in our English History real tolerance of the different forms of Christianity. Cromwell's State Church included men of all forms of evangelical faith. Whether Episcopalian, Baptist, Independent, or Presbyterian in their convictions, any and all who were able to satisfy the Triers of their fitness for the Ministry were able to obtain the cure of souls in the Established Church of the Commonwealth. Many Independents, both Congregationalists and Baptists, would accept no place in a State Establishment of religion; but if there is going to be a State Church, then this was by far the greatest conception of what a State Church should be that ever came to the English people.

In 1662 the victorious Episcopalians were wildly and bitterly determined to return to the old narrow conception of a State Established Church. They succeeded, and that narrow conception has continued to hold its ground from that day to this. They carried in 1662 the Act of Uniformity ; and that Act drove out from the Establishment, in addition to the 500 who had been already compelled to vacate their livings, another 2000 Ministers, whose choice of fidelity at the risk and generally at the actual cost of all things is the brightest page of Church history which man has ever written in England. "The rectors and vicars driven out," says J. R. Green in his "History of England," "were the most active and most learned of their order. . . . They stood at the head of the London clergy. . . . They filled the higher posts at the two Universities. . . . And behind these stood a fifth of the whole body of the clergy, men whose zeal and labour had diffused throughout the country a greater appearance of piety and religion than ever it displayed before." It is very significant of the supreme position of the clergy who were driven out by the Act, that the Episcopalians tried earlier to silence two of the most eminent, viz., Richard Baxter and Edmund Calamy, by offering to make them bishops. As matter of fact, Nonconformity began its second period with a reinforcement consisting of 2500 ministers and multitudes of laymen who were the very cream of the Established Church. Among the ejected were Bartholomew and John Wesley (our John Wesley's paternal great-grandfather and grandfather), and Dr. Annesley his maternal grandfather. In face of the bitter and unspeakably mean persecution of the Nonconformists after 1662, who after that date included many of the very most eminent ministers in the land, it is perplexing to find that Wesley's father and mother entered the Established and persecuting Church.

Never was there such a prospect of supreme influence and usefulness as the Free Churches presented after 1662. Persecution does not destroy a true form of faith, however bitter it may be. It is easy to see that persecution is calculated to rally to the side of the persecuted just those of the more earnest and nobler way of thinking, or, in other words, just the most religious portion of the population. Nonconformity might easily have become the supreme form of religious life in England. The religious forces tell in the

long run, and the religious forces were on Nonconformity's side. How was it that instead of thus becoming the true Church of England, unestablished, Nonconformity failed and sank until its magnificent prospects had gone? I do not think there is any real doubt as to the answer. 1662 was the spectacular crisis in the history of Nonconformity: but the far greater crisis came upon it later and far more slowly; a movement within Nonconformity which paralysed it and ruined it and almost destroyed it. That movement was the rationalistic movement—the latitudinarianism which ruined the fine chances of that Nonconformity just as a similar latitudinarianism is ruining the splendid chances of the Nonconformity of to-day.

The Presbyterians far outnumbered all the other Nonconformists in 1662, and the eclipse of Nonconformity means chiefly the eclipse of Presbyterianism. This Presbyterianism was, of course, not the Presbyterianism which we know to-day. To-day's Presbyterianism is almost exclusively Scotch: the Presbyterianism of 1662 was English. Most of the Puritans had adopted views on Church government which committed them to Presbyterian polity. Elizabeth had strongly disliked and opposed the growing Presbyterianism of her reign. But no opposition checked its growth; and by the time of the Civil War it is doubtful whether Episcopacy or Presbyterianism was the more powerful. Gardiner says that when the Parliament in 1643 established Presbyterianism as the national religion of England, they were not acting against their consciences, although their immediate reason for that step was to get Scotch aid against the King. We have often to-day, in our thought about the Puritans, the idea that the bulk of the Puritans were Independents (whom we now call Congregationalists) and Baptists. That, however, is a mistaken idea. The mighty genius of Cromwell, his wonderful successes both on the field of battle and in the sphere of administration, gave a power to the Independent form of Church government, which numerically did not belong to it. When Cromwell passed away, the control of English affairs fell almost exclusively into the hands of the Presbyterians. They composed the Council of State, they commanded the Army and the Fleet, and they controlled the Universities. Indeed, so powerful were they that for nearly a hundred years after the Ejection of 1662, in spite of their

exclusion from the Universities and the determined persecution which kept them almost entirely outside English official life, the literary and scientific activities of the country were in no small measure sustained by the Presbyterians. This was especially so in London and the Eastern counties; and we cannot refuse our admiration to the men and women who, suffering from all manner of disabilities and most bitterly persecuted by the Establishment, yet maintained their own colleges and successfully claimed a leading place in the intellectual life of the land.

But in that Presbyterianism, and also to some extent among the General Baptists, though only to a very small extent among the Independents or Congregationalists, a leaven had begun to work which within less than a century had wrecked all the fair prospects of English Nonconformity. The Presbyterians had not indeed shown a good spirit at the time of the Restoration. They were so unquestionably the most powerful part of Nonconformity when Charles II. came back, that both he and the Episcopalians carried on all negotiations about toleration with them alone. The Independents were left out in the cold, and their Presbyterian brethren did not even attempt to provide toleration for them. That betrayal was not forgotten by the Independents, and held Presbyterians and Independents apart until the general union which took place between the two bodies after the Revolution of 1688. After that time the Presbyterians were independent in their form of Church government. Thus it came about that the Presbyterian Churches, having become independent in government, were able one by one to fall away until they had almost disappeared—most of them becoming Unitarian Churches, some of them dwindling away to nothing, and the remnant being merged with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The Presbyterian Churches of to-day are a later formation, an English Synod of the Presbyterian Church having been formed in the year 1836.

The movement which wrecked Nonconformity was the claim to what was called "free enquiry" in matters of religion. The way was first marked out by the greatest of Presbyterians, Richard Baxter. His statement of the sense in which he subscribed the Articles is described by Sylvester Horne in his "History of the Free Churches" as "a forecast of that remarkable movement towards the theological freedom which

Nonconformists have led in more recent years. He declared that he accepted only the positive and substantive teaching of the Athanasian Creed, and did not assent to the damnable clauses ; and that he held that unbelievers in Christ who, nevertheless had lived honest and virtuous lives may be saved by Christ's redemption. We are told, Mr. Horne continues, that many of the Dissenting clergy of London concurred in these charitable sentiments." From this comparative small beginning the spirit of "free enquiry" quickly advanced. When subscription to a creed is not simple and unconditional, and yet more when the individual claims the right to traverse Scriptural teachings, even though only in what he himself would describe as secondaries and details, it is like the tiny hole in the dyke. For a time there was a measure of effective resistance, and ministers who had lost their faith seem to have exercised discretion as to confessing that fact. Thus in the famous case of Thomas Emlyn, a Presbyterian minister of Lowestoft, who was appointed to a Presbyterian pastorate in Dublin, we find that Emlyn did not reveal to his Dublin Church that he had previously become a Unitarian ! The fact was, however, discovered ; and Emlyn was barbarously imprisoned and fined. The mode of dealing with him was deplorable and well calculated, by turning him from a traitor into a martyr, to provoke sympathy with his views. Someone has wittily said that when Thomas Nayler claimed that he was "the Everlasting Son, the Prince of Peace, the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely," he deserved to be put into a lunatic asylum, but he did not deserve to be put into a pillory and to have his tongue bored through with a red-hot iron. How many that must have rallied to the blasphemer's side !

The treatment meted out to those who betrayed Christ's cause was often mistaken and defeated its own purpose. Possibly that is in part the reason why the little rift in the dyke grew steadily until the ruinous flood of "free enquiry" came pouring through. History to-day is repeating itself : and the movement which led to the disappearance of the once powerful Presbyterianism, and the growth of Unitarianism at its expense, is full of lessons for the Christians of to-day. That movement I want to depict in a further article.

Notes.

Another Wesleyan Minister and the Bible.

A copy of the *Ceylon Independent* has been sent to us, the issue dated February 27th, 1918, containing a report of the Annual Meeting of the Ceylon Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Rev. E. T. Selby, of the Wesleyan Mission, moved the main resolution. He urged, of course, the importance of Bible distribution, as being the best way of presenting the historical Jesus to a public which is often uninterested and often suspicious of Christian testimony. But in speaking of the Bible he also is reported to have used the following words :—

“If we claim for the Bible that it is an infallible book, or even an infallible text-book of religion, we shall be driven into positions which we cannot defend. The day is past when men could find their final and sufficient authority, either in an infallible book or an infallible Church, or even in an infallible inner light within their own conscience.”

A Broken Rudder and a Dangerous Sea.

Two things we want to say about this : First, if we have no infallible text-book of religion, who is to decide which of the religious ideas presented by the Bible are to be accepted and which are to be rejected. If we cannot be certain that in matters of religion we may depend upon the Bible, then we are adrift with a broken rudder upon a dangerous sea.

The second thing is this : that Mr. Selby flatly contradicts the teaching of our Standards regarding the Bible. We lay before Mr. Selby and our readers some of the statements of the Standards which Mr. Selby contradicts in the remarks quoted above.

Mr. Selby denies that the Bible is an infallible book or an infallible text-book of religion. John Wesley, to quote a few of the many passages dealing with the matter in our Standards, says :—

“The Scripture, therefore, of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God ; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom, which they who are able to taste prefer to all writings of men, however wise or learned or holy.

“An exact knowledge of the truth was accompanied, in the inspired writers, with an exactly regular series of arguments, a precise expression of their meaning, and a genuine vigour of suitable affections. . . .

“In the language of the sacred writings we may observe the utmost depth, together with the utmost ease. All the elegancies of human compositions sink into nothing before it ; God speaks not as man, but as God. His thoughts are very deep ; and thence His words are of unexhaustible virtue. And the language of His messengers, also, is exact in the highest degree : for the words which were given them accurately answered the impression made upon their minds.” (Preface to the Notes on the New Testament).

“And the Scripture cannot be broken—that is, nothing which is written therein can be censured or rejected.” (Note on John 10, 35.)

“The same truth (viz., that searching the Scripture is a means whereby God gives the true wisdom) is delivered, in the fullest manner that can be conceived, in the words that immediately follow : ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God’ ; consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true.” (Sermon 16, p. 193. The italics are ours).

"Thus, if he know, first, 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God,' into all holy tempers and actions, 'they are the Sons of God' (*for which he has the infallible assurance of Holy Writ*); secondly, I am thus 'led by the Spirit of God,' he will easily conclude, 'therefore I am a son of God.'" (Sermon 10, p. 113. The italics are ours).

The "Methodist Times" and Prayers for the Dead.

If prayers for the dead are offered for the saved dead, it seems needless to offer prayers on behalf of those who are in a special sense "with Christ." If our prayers are offered for those who rejected Christ and His salvation, then our prayers seem almost certainly to assume that there are further chances of salvation after death. In either case there is nothing to justify prayers for the dead to be found in the Standards of the Wesleyan Church. On the other hand, they are discouraged: and prayers offered for the dead, on the assumption that we are still able to cherish hope about their salvation, assume a doctrine regarding opportunities of salvation after death, which plainly and seriously contradicts the teaching of our Church. Our Standards lay it down very plainly and repeatedly that there is but one probation, viz., this present life, during which destiny is fixed for ever. Prayer for the dead is a practice which is fraught with great peril, and almost inevitably proceeds upon a false assumption.

We therefore very much regret that very special prominence was given in the *Methodist Times* to a book by Dr. Forsyth, in which he argues strongly for the practice of prayers for the dead. A review of this book was given on the first page; it was of considerable length, and for the most part devoted to an exposition of Dr. Forsyth's views about this practice. Why should it be that a Methodist paper gives all possible prominence to views which are opposed to the teaching of Methodism? Is not this just one of those strange and erroneous doctrines which a Methodist Ministerial Editor ought to banish and drive away? In all directions it seems that Methodist preachers and teachers have ceased to defend and maintain the Methodist position, and are giving much prominence to teachings which subvert Methodism instead. Who, for example again, would imagine the Fernley Trust was established to promote lectures in maintenance of the Methodist positions—viz., of those doctrines of the Standards which God specially committed to the Methodist Church?

A Danger Signal.

How dangerous is all playing with this and similar doctrine to-day we have recently had plain indications. A public indication was given by Cardinal Bourne in his recent "Message to the Nation." He declares there that the British people are becoming increasingly familiar with and sympathetic toward certain Roman Catholic ideas; and he mentions as an illustration the practice of prayers for the dead, to which the War shrines, springing up with such regretful frequency, are accustoming the British people.

John Wesley, the Pioneer of the Modern Temperance Movement.

One of John Wesley's high distinctions was that he was the pioneer of the modern Temperance movement. In the Rules of the Methodist Society—Rules which still stand as the basis of membership in Wesleyan Methodism—it is required that all the members of our Church should show their desire for salvation by "avoiding evil in every kind, especially that which is most generally practised." The Rules then proceed to enumerate some forms of evil from which Methodists must abstain, and amongst these

we find :—*Drunkenness ; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.*” Mr. Wesley did not suffer this Rule to remain a dead letter, for we find that in March, 1743, he expelled two people from the Society at Newcastle-on-Tyne for retailing spirituous liquors. (See *Journal, Standard Edition*, vol. iii., p. 71.) The importance which he attached to this question may be seen from the fact that in one of the sermons included in our Doctrinal Standards there is the following terrific impeachment of the liquor traffic. (Works, vol. vi., p. 128.) It is contained in the sermon on “*The Use of Money* :”—

Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour in his body. Therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire commonly called drams, or spirituous liquors. It is true these may have a place in medicine ; they may be of use in some bodily disorders, although there would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner. Therefore, such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clear. But who are they ? Who prepare them only for this end ? Do you know ten such distillers in England ? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way to any that will buy are poisoners general. They murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep. And what is their gain ? Is it not the blood of these men ? Who would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces ? A curse is in the midst of them. The curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of them ! The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves ; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell ! Blood, blood is there : the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood ! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art “clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day ;” canst thou hope to deliver down thy *fields of blood* to the third generation ? Not so ; for there is a God in heaven. Therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed body and soul, “thy memorial shall perish with thee !”

The Conference of 1917 and the Liquor Traffic.

The following declaration of the Conference of 1917 is in happy harmony with Wesley's attitude to the liquor traffic. (*Min. Conf.* 1917, p. 91):—

The Conference declares that the **MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUOR FOR BEVERAGES IS DEFINITELY OPPOSED TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE STATE AND TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**; and recommends our people everywhere to work and pray for the total and permanent prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks.

The State Purchase Proposals in the Light of the foregoing.

What is involved in the proposals for the State Purchase of the Liquor Traffic ? Its advocates constantly speak of it in a way that assumes that the object of State purchase is the extinction of the traffic. But, though this is what some of its most optimistic supporters hope would be its effect, probably the majority of its supporters have no expectation of anything of the kind. As a matter of fact, the intention of those who make the proposal is that the traffic shall be carried on by the State, instead of being left in private hands. They have an idea that the State would eliminate much of the mischief associated with the traffic by its method of carrying it on. Indeed, some of its advocates are affirming that if £400,000,000 were spent by the State in the acquisition of the traffic, the State would soon more than recuperate itself for this vast expenditure by means of the profits that would accrue from the traffic. The substance then of the proposal is that the State should directly engage in a traffic that is definitely opposed to her own best interests, and that by directly conducting the liquor business the State should place herself in definite antagonism to the kingdom of God. Surely this is not a proposal that anyone who genuinely endorses the declaration of the last Conference can tolerate for a moment. The adop-

tion of a system of State management of the liquor traffic would make the State a purveyor of death and damnation to her own children.

Why is a System of State-Licence preferable to that of State-Management?

Because the very basis of licence is that this traffic is so mischievous that the State feels it to be impossible to allow it the freedom which is accorded to all legitimate industries. The foundation of the present licence-system in England is the Act 5th and 6th year of Edward VI., entitled "*An Act for Keepers of Ale-Houses to be bounde by Recognizances.*" The following is a brief epitome of that Act:—

Forasmuch as intolerable hurts and troubles to the commonwealth do daily grow and increase through such disorders as are had and used in common ale-houses, it is enacted that Justices of the Peace can abolish ale-houses at their discretion, and that no tipping-house can be opened without a licence.

This is the reason of all our licences. They were instituted because of "the intolerable hurts and troubles" arising from this mischievous trade. The feeling of Prohibitionists is that until such time as the nation shall come to recognise the wisdom of exterminating a traffic which we believe ought not to exist, the least mischievous form of permitting the traffic is that it should be put under a licence which is at once a *strait jacket*, a *danger signal*, and a *brand of infamy*. But if by means of State purchase the liquor-shop is exalted into a State institution, the stigma placed upon it by the license is removed, and all reason would say that by conducting the business herself the State sanctions the traffic as an element in the national life, the importance and value of which she recognizes. In other words, by licence, the State says: "This is a wild animal to be kept in a cage." By State-management the State says: "This traffic is such that the State may rightly offer to supply these beverages to her children."

Why should the Journal of the Wesley Bible Union devote so much space to the Drink Question?

Because we stand for the aim of John Wesley, viz.:—*To spread Scriptural holiness through the land.* We do not doubt that the state of the National Conscience, which makes it possible for any Christian man to endure the thought that the State should imbrue her hands in her children's blood by selling to them the poison that "at the last biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder," arises from the lax doctrine which in every direction is seeking to propitiate the carnal mind by all kinds of opportunist concession to the ideas of that world which "lieth in the evil one." There are men who declare themselves to be Prohibitionists in principle who, nevertheless, are willing to make every citizen a direct partner in the active prosecution of the traffic in intoxicating liquors, thus sacrificing principle to opportunism so-called. This is a direct violation of Christian ethics, and is in reality to say, *Let us do evil that good may come.* The idea of conquering the liquor traffic by entering into partnership with it is as if a man were to say: *Inasmuch as we cannot annihilate Satan, let us seek to control him by entering into partnership with him.* We consider that this question lies in the direct line of the work of the Wesley Bible Union, because we consider that the battle against the drink curse is a prominent duty of those who have bound themselves together to maintain the teachings of our Methodist Standards and of Holy Scripture, prominent amongst which we find:—*"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy poison before him, and maketh him drunken"* (Hab. 2¹⁵ as we should translate it). If this woe lies against the individual who thus sins against his fellow, what should be said of a State that should purvey to her children a poison which is the prolific source of disease, vice, crime, insanity, inefficiency, premature death, and hereditary degeneration?

“Does He Believe and Preach our Doctrines”?

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

The above is the question that every minister in the Wesleyan Methodist Church is required to answer in the affirmative at every May Synod. If on account of illness, or for any other reason, a minister is unable to attend the Synod, he is required to answer the question in writing. The same question is asked every quarter at the Local Preachers' Meeting in every Circuit concerning every Local Preacher.

What is meant by “our doctrines”? This question is answered by the Doctrinal Proviso of the Model Deed which reads as follows:—

Provided always that no person or persons whosoever shall at any time hereafter, be permitted to preach or expound God's Holy Word, or to perform any of the usual acts of Religious Worship, upon the said piece of ground and hereditaments, nor in the said Chapel or place of Religious Worship and premises, or any of them, or any part or parts thereof, nor in or upon the appurtenances thereto belonging, or any of them, or any part or parts thereof, who shall maintain, promulgate, or teach, any Doctrine, or Practice, contrary to what is contained in certain Notes on the New Testament, commonly reputed to be the Notes of the said John Wesley, and in the First Four Volumes of Sermons commonly reputed to be written and published by him.

The attitude which the Conference has taken in respect of this question of Doctrine is also set forth in the following extracts from recent Minutes of Conference.

Orthodoxy of Sunday School Officers and Teachers.—The Chapel Model Deed provides that in any School held in a building settled on the Trusts of the Chapel Model Deed the teaching is always subject to the Clause in the Deed respecting doctrine; and the Conference has specifically directed that no person shall be continued as an Officer or Teacher who shall at any time be declared by the Local Sunday School Council or the Leaders' Meeting unfit in respect of general character or of religious opinions for the Office he sustains or for taking part in the Christian education of the young. (See *Min. Conf. 1915 p. 442*; also *Min. Conf. 1916, p. 482*. The following authorities are given in *Min. Conf. 1916; Minutes* vol. vi. [1827], pp. 287-8; vol. xix. [1873], p. 176; 1911, pp. 421-2; 1912, pp. 439-40; *Summary* p. 203).

Orthodoxy of Office-bearers.—No person shall, on any account, be permitted to retain any official situation in our Societies who holds opinions contrary to the total depravity of human nature, the divinity and atonement of Christ, the influence and witness of the Holy Spirit, and Christian holiness, as believed by the Metho-

dists (*Min. Conf. 1915, p. 429; Min. Conf. 1916, p. 468.* The authorities quoted in *Min. Conf. 1916* are *Minutes* vol. ii. [1807] p. 405; *Summary* p. 62.)

Up to the year 1913 the Conference never passed without censure any definite departure from doctrinal integrity which was brought to its notice. I do not say that it has always exercised *adequate* discipline on this subject. I do not think it has. But still the Conference prior to 1913 consistently shewed a firm resolve on the whole to guard the connexion against any approach to doctrinal chaos. The decision of the Conference of 1913 in relation to the Jackson case has created a new situation which has opened the sluice-gates in such a way that it is now very difficult to know where we stand doctrinally. The decision of the Conference of 1913 amounts to this that a man may ascribe error to the Bible and to our Lord Himself, and yet be pronounced not to be in conflict with our Standards.

I am sorry that the Standing Orders which we have quoted above on the Orthodoxy of Office-bearers and Sunday School Officers and Teachers have been omitted from the *Minutes* of 1917. It is to be hoped that this omission does not arise from any desire to obscure the importance of our doctrinal guarantees, but is no more than a result of the necessity of reducing the size of the *Minutes* in consequence of the war-time cost of production. Matters of this kind need to be watched at the present moment by those who wish to maintain the integrity of our doctrine.

John Wesley was careful to insist upon the vital distinction between mere *human opinions* and *essential doctrines*. He has been much misrepresented as if with him the catholicity of spirit which made him indifferent to opinions made him indifferent to the central matters of faith. When he was accused of latitudinarianism by some of his opponents because of what he had said about religion not being a matter of opinion, he most emphatically repudiated that interpretation of his words. For instance, in the introduction to his sermon on the Trinity, while he says that "persons may be right in their opinions and yet have no religion at all; and, on the other hand, persons may be truly religious who hold many wrong opinions," yet he goes on to say that there are doctrines "which it nearly concerns us to know, as having a close connection with vital religion. And doubtless we may

rank among these that contained in the words above cited : " There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost and These Three are One." In the context he speaks of the best explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity he had ever seen as being " the creed commonly ascribed to Athanasius." While he insists most strongly that Methodists do not contend about opinions, he is careful to maintain that he does stand definitely for *essential truth*. I will content myself with one illustration taken from his tract entitled " The Character of a Methodist " (*Works, vol. viii. p. 340*).

The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the point. Whosoever, therefore, imagines that a Methodist is a man of such or such an opinion, is grossly ignorant of the whole affair ; he mistakes the truth totally. *We believe, indeed, that "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God" ; and herein we are distinguished from Jews, Turks, and Infidels. We believe the written word of God to be the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice ; and herein we are fundamentally distinguished from those of the Romish Church. We believe Christ to be the eternal, supreme God, and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians. But as to all opinions WHICH DO NOT STRIKE AT THE ROOT OF CHRISTIANITY, we think and let think.* So that whatsoever they are, whether right or wrong, they are no distinguishing marks of a Methodist.

From the above it is manifest that when Mr. Wesley said that he did not insist upon opinions, he only meant those opinions "*which do not strike at the root of Christianity.*" By the doctrinal proviso of the Model Deed he shewed the stress which he lays upon the essential doctrines of the Faith.

Nothing is more absurd than a common popular saying : *It does not matter what a man believes, so long as his life is right.* This saying is by many supposed to be the height of reason, whereas it really is the acme of folly. The fact is that a man's real beliefs determine his life. If he believes lies, he will live lies. If men would but apply the above-quoted popular saying in daily life, they would recognize its outrageous absurdity. For instance, suppose that a man believed that arsenic is a good condiment, and were to act on that belief, and use it instead of salt, his faith would not save him from being poisoned. If a man believes that beer is the elixir of life, and is a heavy beer-drinker, his faith in

beer will not save him from the physical degeneration, the mental inefficiency produced by the brain-poison, and the premature grave to which the alcoholic habit will infallibly lead him. If a man is a devotee of nicotine, his belief in the value of smoking will not guarantee him against smoker's dyspepsia, against smoker's heart-disease, against smoker's cancer, and against the clouding of his brain by the narcotic. In every realm of practical life, everything depends on what a man believes. In the same way it is true in the higher realms of life of the soul. It is not a man's faith that saves him, but that which a man believes that saves him. A very common idea seems to be that it is the merit of a man's faith that saves him, whereas the value of faith depends *upon the object upon which it is set*. We are not saved by our faith but BY JESUS on whom our Faith relies. In other words, the value of a church is determined by the creed into which it leads its members. Evil doctrines produce evil living, as the condition of Europe under the reign of Popery has demonstrated beyond all controversy, as the present degradation of Germany shews, manifesting to the world the natural ripe fruit of the theology of the Higher Criticism so mis-called. A Methodism that sanctioned the doctrines of Modernism would be a curse to mankind, and the sooner it could be swept out of existence the better. A church pretending to uphold Standards of Doctrine which it openly flouts is a church that is itself a living lie, and deserves the righteous doom which will come upon all lies and liars. A church which has no message from God to man is a useless parasite eating away the vitals of mankind. The labour and time spent in maintaining such an organization is worse than wasted, for it is not only worthless but positively mischievous, destroying, not saving, the souls of men.

The Book of Jonah.

REV. SHERWIN SMITH, M.A., B.D.

Sir Philip Magnus, Member of Parliament for London University, and, I believe, a Jew, has written an article in the *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1918) on "The Book of Jonah." There is a more reverential tone in it than one generally

associates either with the *Hibbert* or with critical scholars. True it is that Sir Philip does not claim to be an original authority on these matters, but to get most of his information from others. But at any rate he does not out-Herod Herod. He believes the story happened if it did not happen just as it is written. He seems to have no sympathy with the "Allegory" idea.

His simple device is, cut out the three verses, twenty-five words in all, in which the "great fish" is mentioned, and you still have left a connected story. The three verses may be regarded as an interpolation by some scribe, who wanted to explain how Jonah got ashore after having been cast out of the ship. Now if you are going to have any cutting this device is the best of any. It certainly leaves a hiatus, but not an absolutely crucial one. But cutting-out is a very poor way out of a difficulty. There is no rhyme nor reason in it. It is burking the real difficulty. Any man can use scissors, but who can write the original book?

Besides, cutting-out in this instance, though it is the cutting-out of so unthinkable a miracle, does not really relieve the situation. I have tried reading the Book of Jonah with these three verses (i. 17, ii. 1, 10) left out, and somehow the general impression left seems to demand the "big fish." The whole book is impregnated by it. The story is all of a piece. He fled from the presence of the Lord. He was asleep in the hold during a great storm. The mariners actually threw him overboard at his own suggestion. The only rational thing in the book is his prayer. When he got on to his knees he was sobered and like other men. Then he went to Nineveh a second time, and the effect was that even the cattle wore sack-cloth. Well, God repented; and Jonah told God that he had said at the very beginning that He would repent. But Jonah was not pleased that God was what he, Jonah, said He would be. He said "I told you so," and was forthwith angry. God then treated him like a spoilt child, took away one of his toys from him, and when he beat his breast and wrung his hands, God said to him, "You carry on like this over a gourd; and yet the real miseries which you have been prophesying over Nineveh don't move you an atom. You consign all that unthinking humanity to perdition, and it does not move you a hair. You have at last done your duty, but, please, leave the manner of fulfilment to Me."

Now I must say, when I analyse the Book of Jonah this way—and I do not think that I have done it unfairly—it seems to me almost natural for God to give Jonah a sea-experience such as no other man ever had, and which could not be described without an air of incongruity. There is an air of incongruity about Jonah all the way through. He is the queerest prophet you ever saw, and if I may dare to say so, with the queer, God shows Himself queer. I believe the common instinct is perfectly right, which always couples Jonah with the fish. That *is* the man. Our Lord with His divine unerring instinct does the same thing.

That is another very serious consideration. A writer in trying to rationalise *Jonah* takes out the very three verses which apparently made most impression on our Lord. It would leave one of our Lord's sayings completely in the air : "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, even so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." I suppose the modern mind says, "I cannot believe the story of Jonah, I simply cannot." We say, "You must." "Why?" "Because Jesus believed it." "Well, who is Jesus? Did He not belong to His own time, and He believed what His own time believed; but that does not mean that I have got to believe what He believed." We say, "You must. Who is Jesus? He is the Son of Man. He is not for an age, but for all time. He spake as never man spake. He did not speak locally, or Jewishly, or as an Eastern. He spoke eternal truth. His mind was the mind of Man, made possible in this sinning transient world by being linked with the mind of God." But we also say, "You must, because He died for you. He went down into the heart of the earth for you. The earth with her bars closed upon Him for ever. He went down to the roots of the mountains. Out of the belly of hell He cried. This is something you know nothing about. You must just listen as He divinely describes His own experience, and He says, 'As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, even so shall the Son of Man be.' Who are you to say that Jonah was never in the belly of the sea-monster? What do you know about it? When you have been three days in the heart of the earth, you may have a right to speak. When you feel the sins of mankind dooming you to that fate, you may stand up and give a ver-

dict as to what might or might not happen to Jonah. Till then, it is your province to listen. Don't be wiser than your Lord. You may know, or think you know, more about electricity or steam or astronomy than He did, but you don't know more about being in the heart of the earth. The Twentieth Century is no wiser than the First, and still He says to us, 'No sign shall be given you save the sign of Jonah.' You *must* believe the incredible wonder."

Upon all these questions of the Old Testament we run up finally upon the rock of our Lord's testimony; and that is a rock which if we run up against, it breaks us in pieces, and if it falls upon us it will grind us to powder.

No one can read the Book of Jonah without feeling that it is of the same style and period as the story of Elijah and Elisha; and one would expect it to be. He comes just between those miraculous prophets and the writing prophets. Jonah in a sense was neither, but he was a very important link between the two, and he was a link which threatened to break. He did not write, but the account of him has been written and placed among the writings, and is in harmony with them. He did no miracles, but he had miracles done to him, and one can understand what I may call the desperation of God in keeping Jonah to his work if he was a link, as he was, leading from Elijah to Hosea and Isaiah. The miracle to Jonah is not a useless miracle. It has a sufficient reason in our eyes. It carries on the miraculousness of Elijah and Elisha in order to introduce the prophetic dispensation. It also corresponds to the peculiar disposition of Jonah, and was a miracle which counterbalanced the disadvantages of his nature. It was such a manner of being dealt with, that even he could not resist. No one can tell what his fish was like. Jonah's own description in his prayer is of going down into the depths of the sea and the weeds wrapping him about the head. But if he was there three days, how was he kept alive, and where could he breathe? The inside of a fish is as likely as any in a position like that.

Finally, the experience of Jonah reads a lesson to us who are of a dogmatic temper. He was of a dogmatic temper, and somehow it led him astray. He hung back at first. It seemed dreadful to concentrate all his soul into the message to Nineveh: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be over-

thrown." He recalled to God the other side of the picture, that "He was long-suffering, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, and repented Him of the evil." There was a certain anguish to him in the position God called him to take up, and he fled from it. But it had to be, and his natural naked dogmatism came to the front, and he triumphed. Yet in the very triumph he fell. He became verbal, pedantic, a slave to his own words, to that consistency which is the hobgoblin of narrow minds. All Jonah had been was in God, but so much more was in God, and he could not trust that "so much more." If God went beyond Jonah, the fat was in the fire. Perhaps the modern putting of it is :—

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be.
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Jonah was a broken light of God, and he shone truly, but he was not the whole light. He was a lighthouse set on a rock in a stormy sea, and every five seconds he gave his warning light, but all the intervening four seconds was darkness as far as Jonah is concerned.

I say, his experience reads a lesson to us who are of a dogmatic temper. I would not say much for the man who is not. Never was there a time when the dogmatic temper was more needed. We need men who have convictions about the truth, and are prepared to stake all upon them. I am prepared to say that no man will accept the miracle of Jonah who is not of the dogmatic temper. He will have to have something to outweigh the modern scientific temper, and that something will be a conviction of revealed truth, truth which God alone has given, and which it is our sacred trust to keep and declare. To believe Jonah one will have to believe all the rest of the Bible; and to believe all the rest of the Bible one will have to believe Jonah. Let us honour the dogmatic temper. Perhaps in nothing is that dogmatic temper so put to straits as when it is called upon to declare eternal punishment. No one can declare such a thing unless he stakes all upon it. He goes through the modern world as Jonah went through Nineveh. And yet with the experience of Jonah before him, he wishes to avoid the snares of the dogmatic temper. He never wishes to declare eternal punishment as though he enjoyed it, as though he would be disappointed if those he had doomed escaped it. He could never be angry

over a bit of burnt toast at tea, and then go into the pulpit and preach hell-fire. He would be torn in two as he declared the message which God had given him.

The dogmatic temper tends to be hard, and to grow hard, to seek logical triumphs and to lose touch with the hearts of men and the little innocent things which do not know their right hand from their left. Perhaps St. Paul's phrase is the ideal, "speaking," or better "holding the truth *in love*," and it can only be got by a community of spirits, who forbear one another in love, make a believing Church together, are not tossed about by every wind of doctrine, and grow up in all things unto Him which is the head, even Christ.

If we are called to be as Jonah, let us so be Jonah as to make men acknowledge, A Greater than Jonah is here.

Reports of Meetings.

A Fine Example Set at Luton.

Early in May the Sunday School Anniversary was held at Chapel Street, Luton, and Mr. Daniel Hone took the chair at the evening meeting during the week. Mr. Hone, who does not often miss the opportunity of serving the cause of the Bible, spoke first of the supreme importance of a direct spiritual aim in Sunday School work and of the definite conversion of the child; and he then proceeded to give the Sunday School workers one of the most trenchant warnings possible as to the perils besetting the Sunday School and the whole Church from the false teachings, which under the names of "higher criticism," "new light," and "new theology," are making their way into Wesleyan literature, addresses, and sermons in all sorts of directions.

Taking many definite illustrations, especially from the Fernley Lecture of Mr. Jackson's, which Conference so fatally endorsed, he showed that the "new light" which is vaunted as so necessary and helpful to us is identical in all manner of ways with the infidelity of Tom Paine, who said the same things a hundred years ago. Therefore it is certainly not *new*; and instead of being light, it is in a great part the darkness of hell.

Mr. Hone is an admirable speaker, and the meeting was not only profitable in a high degree, but of the liveliest interest; and several at the close of the meeting personally gave the chairman their warm thanks for his faithfulness.—H. C. M.

A Wesley Bible Union Effort at Huddersfield.

A very enterprising and useful effort was made on behalf of the Bible Union at Huddersfield, by Rev. G. Armstrong Bennetts, B.A. and Miss Bennetts.

The Temperance Hall was taken on May 1st, and Mr. John Duxbury was engaged to give some of his famous Recitals, the proceeds to go towards the funds of the Bible Union. Mr. Duxbury is not only a great elocutionist but he is also a man of great insight into the spirit and meaning of Scripture. In the afternoon Mr. J. W. E. Seaton took the chair, and Mr. Duxbury

recited with splendid vividness and effect the Book of Job, reaching the climax when in deep low tones, which helped the audience to understand the still small voice which Elijah heard in the wilderness, the reciter repeated the final words in which God Himself speaks.

At night Mr. Arthur Fieldhouse presided, and Mr. Duxbury gave a miscellaneous programme which was immensely enjoyed. At each of the gatherings the President of the Union, Rev. G. Armstrong Bennetts, had a fine opportunity of explaining the basis and aims of the W.B.U.—an opportunity of which he made the fullest use. He laid bare in brief speeches the terrible abandonment of faith in the infallible authority of Holy Scripture, and of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, by ministers and teachers as well as members of the Christian Church itself. He urged his hearers *to study* this vastly important matter for themselves, pointing out the desolating effect of the “higher critical” doctrines, as shown in the terrible degeneration of Germany; and implored his hearers to rally for the defence and for the promulgation of Bible religion.

Miss Bennetts arranged for a Stall for the Sale of Fancy and Useful Articles, which was open before the afternoon Recital, and also in the interval between the afternoon and evening gatherings. On each occasion there was a large audience for the Elocutionist, and at each Recital what is coming to be known as the Wesley Bible Union Hymn was sung. I am told it did one’s soul good to hear the audience ring out the chorus of that hymn :—

Jesus saves me ! Jesus saves me !
Wheresoe’er I be :
Out on the word of God I’m standing,
From every sin set free !

I should like to offer very hearty congratulations to Mr. and Miss Bennetts upon a very happy and enterprising effort to forward the interests of true Methodism and of the Union. Some new members were enrolled, and a net sum of £31 was raised for the funds of the Union.

H. C. M.

Free Church Federation and the Higher Criticism.

MR. A. GREGORY WILKINSON.

The question of the Higher Criticism has just come before the meetings of the Baptist Union in a somewhat acute form, which may have several points of interest for the Wesley Bible Union. The subject arose out of the proposed scheme for the Federation of the Free Churches. For some time past certain committees, representing the various Free Churches (including the Wesleyan) have been preparing a scheme for Federation. Their reports are now complete, and the various churches are being asked to adopt the scheme and put it into operation without delay. The Baptist Union was the first Assembly to deal officially with these reports, and in due course, I suppose, they will come before

the Wesleyan Conference. I have not the slightest idea how the Wesleyan Conference views this scheme, or what action it may take. In this paper I propose simply to recount the action of the Baptist Union, and express a few reflections thereupon.

It will be best to relate first of all the principal facts as succinctly as possible.

The four preliminary Committees had issued reports (a) on the Constitution of the proposed Federation, (b) on Ministry, (c) on Evangelisation and (d) on Faith. I do not propose to discuss these reports on their merits or demerits. Notice was duly given that a resolution would be proposed at the Baptist Union Meeting on April 24th, to the effect that the Union should adopt these reports, and agree to federate with the other Churches upon that basis. The only report which occasioned serious discussion at the Union was the report on *Faith*, and the only serious opposition to the Federation scheme arose from those who maintained that the proposed doctrinal basis was unsatisfactory, inasmuch as it would leave the door open for the supporters of the Modernist or Higher Critical teaching.

A venerable minister, Dr. Mountain, of Tunbridge Wells—a member of the Baptist Union—took alarm at the proposals to be voted upon, and for some months made strenuous efforts to accomplish the rejection of the scheme. Consequently something like a pitched battle occurred at the meeting of the Union, recalling a somewhat similar conflict in the Wesleyan Conference of 1913.

Dr. Mountain issued two pamphlets; the first entitled, "Is Free Church Federation Practicable?" the second, "Shall Baptists forfeit their honour? Can we Federate?" A younger minister, Rev. C. T. Cook, of Coventry, also issued a pamphlet on the same lines; and these pronouncements have been pretty widely circulated and discussed in Baptist circles in anticipation of the Resolutions to be proposed on April 24th. I have all these pamphlets before me as I write. They are all animated by a spirit of intense opposition to the German Rationalism, as Dr. Mountain generally calls it, and they would delight the hearts of the Wesley Bible Union by their soundness and loyalty to the Authority of Scripture. I must not stay to give a detailed account of these publications. The writers point out that

the Committee on *Faith*, which had to prepare a doctrinal statement providing a practical basis for Federation, included certain gentlemen who were known to be decided Higher Critics, and that the Declaration on which they had agreed showed clear signs of being framed so as to avoid offending or alienating the sympathies of Modernists; that consequently the adoption of such a Declaration would be tantamount to an express recognition of the Higher Critical school as an integral part of the Federation to be formed. Dr. Mountain, the leading spirit in this opposition, gave notice of an amendment expressing regret that the Union could not accept the "Declaratory Statement of Common Faith and Practice" as a satisfactory basis of Federation for the following reasons: (1) that it is *transparently ambiguous*, especially as regards the Divine Authority of the Bible as the Word of God: and (2) that it is *significantly inadequate*, inasmuch as it omits all reference to such doctrines as the Virgin Birth of our Lord, His absolutely sinless Life, His Infallibility as a Teacher, etc., etc. Respecting the first point Dr. Mountain regrets that the Committee had formulated the statement that "the Holy Scriptures *contain* the sure word of God," whereas they should have adopted some such expression as that of the Westminster Divines in the Larger Catechism, that "the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments *are* the word of God." Most certainly the word *contain* in this connection is broad and ambiguous enough to satisfy the Modernist party. A haystack may *contain* a needle; and the problem may be set; "given the haystack, to find the needle"; "given the Scriptures, to find the word of God." Thus the pamphleteers contend that they are being asked to federate on a basis utterly unsatisfactory for Protestant Evangelical Churches. Moreover, they have no difficulty in shewing by express quotations from Free Church writers that Christ's infallibility as a Teacher, is distinctly questioned and denied. Members of the Wesley Bible Union will not be surprised to learn that in this connection certain notoriously Christ-dishonouring statements from Professor Geo. Jackson's notoriously Bible-dishonouring book figure quite prominently. In brief, these pamphleteers agree that the "Declaration" is an ingenious but unworthy compromise with the Higher Critics, and they urge that if Federation can only be accomplished on such lines, it had better be abandoned altogether.

It was therefore after some months of vigorous discussion that these proposals were brought forward on April 24th and opposed by Dr. Mountain and his friends on the grounds set forth in their pamphlets. The discussion lasted some two hours, and in the end Dr. Mountain's amendment was lost by an overwhelming majority. The papers say that the result was received with great enthusiasm by the Assembly. The Federation scheme was adopted with great heartiness, and there the matter now stands. Such are the bare facts.

I am not at all concerned to discuss what the effects of this adopted scheme may prove to be ; I am only interested in the side light which it throws upon the relation of the Churches to Modernism. And any remarks I make upon this subject are based simply upon the printed reports of the proceedings. I have no private and confidential information to go upon.

1. I have a strong conviction that there was an inherent weakness in the case presented by Dr. Mountain and his party, though, as far as I can see, it was never touched upon in the discussion. It is a well-known fact that the Higher Criticism is prevalent in the Baptist Churches, as truly as in the other Free Churches. The pamphleteers did not set forth quotations from Baptist Higher Critics. But I could have provided them with some, as outrageous as anything they quote.

Moreover, the Baptist Union is itself simply a voluntary Federation of Baptist Churches. No Baptist Church or Minister is necessarily connected with the Baptist Union. In this respect the Union differs entirely from the relation of Wesleyan Churches and Ministers to the Wesleyan Conference. Mr. Spurgeon left the Baptist Union in the Downgrade controversy 30 years ago, but remained a Baptist Pastor just as before. During these 30 years some prominent Baptist Churches and Ministers have stood outside the Baptist Union, and no one remains within its fold by compulsion.

The case, therefore, stands as follows : Dr. Mountain and his party object to the Federation scheme mainly on the ground that it would bring them into recognised and organised fellowship with the Modernist party. But they are already in actual fellowship with the Modernists, because of the well-known fact that avowed Modernists remain unchallenged in the very Union in which Dr. Mountain and his

friends are members. One would think that consistency would have impelled Dr. Mountain to challenge the presence of higher critics in the Union, and that in case he could not secure their expulsion, he would have himself withdrawn from the Union, like Mr. Spurgeon. This aspect of the case has been put before the Doctor and his friends privately, but they do not recognise its cogency.

Those who judge by the pamphlets alone might conclude that the Higher Criticism was quite unknown in Baptist Churches, and universally regarded with abhorrence by such Churches ; but it is not so. It appears to me, therefore, that there is an element of inconsistency in the present protest against Federation. Those who identify themselves with Dr. Mountain are at liberty to resign their connection with the Baptist Union at once, and by so doing they would stand clear of complicity in what they regard as a compromise with error. But I fail to recognise the moral right of those who are at present voluntary members of a Federation which *tolerates* avowed Modernists, to protest against Federation with other Churches on the ground that such a Federation would have to include Modernists.

2. But quite apart from this consideration, the reports of the debate give no sign whatever of any serious concern about the prevalence of the Higher Criticism in the Free Churches. Dr. Mountain does not appear to have been supported by any leading men of his Denomination. The Doctor is himself a venerable retired Pastor, who therefore speaks for no Church, only for himself. Doubtless, he would have been thankful if any prominent pastors had been willing to lead the campaign in his place. All honour to an old gentleman for bravely leading a forlorn hope, when he might fairly have shrunk from the labour on the ground of advanced years. Still the fact remains that the attack was led by a retired minister. The Rev. C. T. Cook is a younger man, who courageously supported the Doctor, but the leading men, Dr. Clifford, Dr. Meyer, Dr. Chas. Brown, Mr. Shakespeare, Mr. Phillips, of Bloomsbury, Mr. Fullerton, of the Missionary Society, were all decidedly opposed to Dr. Mountain.

The leading attack on Dr. Mountain and his pamphleteering campaign fell to Dr. Charles Brown, of Ferme Park, a man of the highest reputation in the Baptist Churches. Yet, in Dr. Brown's estimation, this attempt to raise a barrier

to Federation was "*splitting straws on theology*." Dr. Brown adopted a bantering tone regarding the tenets of Modernists, saying that while they all retained the Deity and atoning work of our Lord, he was not concerned "even if we don't believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch."

On the argument that the Bible *is*—not *contains*—the word of God, he condescended to mere puerilities. "But is it?" said Dr. Brown; "part of it is the word of man to God; it even includes the word of Satan, 'Skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life.'" Again, "Does it really matter whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch, including the account of his own death, or Samuel the whole of the books bearing his name?" It is a great surprise to me to find Dr. Brown condescending to such unworthy presentations of the points at issue. The report may be imperfect, and therefore possibly misleading; but if not, it is clear that the Doctor has never yet realised how deeply the Higher Criticism cuts into the vitals of Christianity. Dr. Mountain was taunted with "splitting straws" and promptly extinguished as a mere faddist.

Anyway, it becomes quite clear that the presence of the Modernist spirit in the Churches creates no alarm in the minds of the leading men of the Baptist demonination. It would have been quite open to Dr. Brown to say that he deprecated the presence of the Higher Criticism in the Churches, but considered that Dr. Mountain was attacking an admitted evil in an unsatisfactory way. But there was no sign of any concern or alarm in anything that was said by the leading men. And that being so, the general outlook is dark indeed. It appears that in all the great Free Churches the Higher Critics sit in the seats of the mighty, and ministers and people in general love to have it so.

There appears, therefore, to be an urgent need that the minority in these Churches, who grieve over the prevalent departure from the truth, should draw closer together, should try to understand one another better, should attempt more mutual counsel and encouragement. The position is very similar in all these Churches. The very prevalence of a great false Unity in Error may be the Divine method of bringing about a deeper Unity of the Spirit on the part of the "remnant" than has ever been the case while each denomination was mainly occupied with its own concerns.

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Breakers Ahead in the Approaching Conference.

On Friday, June 21st, the Committee of the Wesley Bible Union held a meeting to consider the phase of the Doctrinal Crisis in Wesleyan Methodism which will present itself at the approaching Conference, and feels that we have arrived at a stage of this controversy which is likely to make the Conference of 1918 the most critical that has yet been reached in relation to the determination of Wesleyan Methodist doctrine. Three matters will come before Conference which will definitely raise the question of our doctrines, viz., the report of the Spiritual Advance Committee, the proposals for Methodist Reunion, and the report of the Committee on Unity of Doctrine. In view of this fact the Committee of

the Wesley Bible Union resolved that this number of our *Journal* should be enlarged in order that we may bring before our readers and the Connexion generally our sense of the extreme seriousness of the situation.

Omitting for the present the two other questions under which doctrine must come under the consideration of the Conference, every one must see that the whole subject must be faced when the report of the Committee on Unity of Doctrine is presented. Those who are seeking to relax the strictness of our doctrinal discipline will, of course, contend for their position, and will strain every nerve to secure such a decision as will uphold them in the promulgation of views which are based upon what they call "modern light."

During the past five years, in consequence of the fatal decision of the Plymouth Conference in the Jackson case, the advocates of a theology based upon the Higher Criticism (so misnamed) and the Evolution Theory have been very bold and active amongst us. We may be sure that they will make a resolute attempt to induce the Conference to make such a pronouncement as would give a definite indication that Modernist doctrines may be taught amongst us without dread of Conference censure or interference. This is the subject dealt with in most of the articles in this number of the *Journal*, and we ask our readers to give them their immediate and prayerful attention, and we implore those who love the truth to take all possible measures to make the Conference realize that there are a very large number of people in our Connexion who are strongly opposed to the abandonment of Methodist doctrine, and that such abandonment would be likely to cause a serious split. There is no doubt that there are many who desire to substitute for our Standards the *interpretation* which the Conference may choose to put upon the Standards. This is, in effect, the Romanist position which removes the seat of authority in religion from the Revelation of God to the opinion of the Church. This is tantamount to putting Conference before God, and to making the interpretation of Conference the final rule of faith and practice. If the Conference should thus declare its voice to be final as to the doctrines of Methodism, the doctrinal proviso of the Model Deed would thereby be abrogated, and by that violation of the Deed the Conference would forfeit its right to hold and to administer any of the properties settled upon that Deed.

Who is on the Lord's Side ?

We feel that in view of the approaching Conference we need to do our utmost to issue a trumpet-call to all those in Wesleyan Methodism who believe that the Bible is the word of God and that Jesus Christ is Very God to join hands in defence of these truths and in defence of the very foundations of the Faith. There has never been a more critical hour than the present in the history of Wesleyan Methodism. The Conference of last year recognized the fact that there is a doctrinal crisis in our midst by appointing a Committee to sit during the year and to report to the Conference of 1918 upon this subject. The report of that Committee necessarily raises the whole question. It is an unwritten law of our Church that the proceedings of Conference Committees are not to be published until they have been presented to Conference, except in cases where the consent of the Committee has been given to their publication, or where it is an obvious presumption that the Committee can have no reason against their publication. We are, therefore, not in a position to disclose the findings of this Committee. But as we look at the doctrinal position at the present moment we are bound to say that the outlook has never been so serious as now, and the state of things in our Church is steadily growing worse. To speak plainly : there is evidently in all the Churches a strong party who are bent upon obtaining a recognition of a doctrinal basis for the Christian Church which denies the supreme and infallible authority of Holy Scripture, and which is based upon such a doctrine of the Kenosis as affirms that our Lord Himself often spoke from the standpoint of the errors of His age and nation. We are prepared to maintain that these doctrines are subversive of the very foundations of Faith. They amount to a declaration that God has not given an authoritative revelation of Himself to mankind. A man who holds these views is practically an infidel. He has renounced the Christian religion. It has been truthfully said that there is no longer a Tom Paine assaulting the Christian Faith from outside, because the doctrines of infidelity are being proclaimed from the Christian pulpit itself. In this we see before our eyes the fulfilment of the message of the Holy Ghost

through Peter :—" There shall be false prophets among you who privily shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them " (2 Pet. 2¹). These teachers are like those of whom Jude speaks : " There are certain men crept in unawares—denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ " (Jude 4). We fear that many who love the Saviour are blind to the serious nature of these Modernist heresies. Indeed, we have no doubt that many who hold, and preach these views are themselves blinded to the real nature of the doctrines which they hold. In their desire to associate themselves with the prevailing tone of thought in modern universities they try to find some way of retaining what they think to be the essentials of Christianity, while accepting many of the views of rationalistic infidelity. Paul told us that it would be a characteristic of the antichristian teachers of the last days that they would be "**DECEIVING AND BEING DECEIVED**" (2 Tim. 3¹³). Many of these teachers doubtless persuade themselves that they are defenders of the faith, while really, without knowing it, they are engaged in teaching that no one can trust any promise or revelation of the Bible as of Divine authority, or any teaching of Christ as being the Word of God. If the Bible anywhere teaches error, then it is open to opinion whether any other part of it may not be erroneous also. If Jesus Christ can be corrected at any one part of His teaching, then it is quite in order for any man to select any other part of His teaching and criticize this also. *Can He be Very God who can be corrected by a Modernist teacher?*

This, indeed, is the crucial point of the whole controversy. The Kenotist doctrine of the Person of Christ is in its most advanced form practically Unitarian, although those who embrace it will not admit that it is so. What is the object of the Incarnation? Surely it is to manifest the Pleroma.* The Holy Spirit speaking by Paul tells us : " In Him dwelleth **ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY**" (Col. 2⁹). The Modernist doctrine is that the object of the Incarnation was to *conceal* the Godhead, and that Jesus Christ was simply a Jew of His age Whose judgments were framed "*according to the fantastic notions of an unscientific age.*" The real question before us at the

*Kenosis is the Greek word for "emptiness," the opposite of pleroma, fulness.

approaching Conference is : *Shall it be legitimate to preach what in essence is Unitarian doctrine from the Wesleyan Methodist pulpit?* This is the question now at stake. The Modernist message to mankind is in substance this : The Bible **CONTAINS** the Word of God in a book some parts of which are fictitious, some parts of which are deliberate forgeries, and some of the teachings of which are mistaken presentations of what Jesus of Nazareth actually taught, His reporters misunderstanding Him ; and even amongst the things which are accepted as the words of Jesus many Modernists assert that there are erroneous conceptions belonging to His age and nation. Consequently, it remains for the enquirer after truth to sift out the truth from the error in this book which cannot be trusted as it stands. The teachers of the Modernist school vacillate in regard to the method by means of which the errors of the Bible are to be discriminated from its truths. Many of them say : *Only that is true which authenticates itself to the individual reader.* Others say : *It must be determined by the general consensus of Biblical scholars.*

The latter is practically identical with the Romish view which makes the Church the ultimate court of appeal. No, we beg the pardon of Rome, the Romish view makes the seat of authority to be at least a court of *professed* disciples of Christ. We are obliged to say "*professed*," for the history of the Papacy reveals the fact that many of the Popes have been men whose character was far below the level of the standards of common worldly ethics. But the Roman seat of authority is, to say the least, theoretically a Christian court, and has in it much of the leaven of Christian truth. The court of that which is called Biblical scholarship is largely composed of mere philologists, antiquarians, grammarians, and rationalistic philosophers, many of whom repudiate all supernatural religion and even the conception of the possibility of any direct revelation from God. It is not too much to say that the Higher Critics (so misnamed) are the great majority of them strongly infected with the deadly microbe of antipathy to miracle.

That which leaves the final decision of religious authority to the judgment of the individual reader is the most mischievous form of the deification of human nature. The doctrine of Papal Infallibility is one form of the fulfilment of

the prophecy of the Bible concerning antichrist : " The man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God " (2 Thess. 2^{3, 4}). Even here the Papal apotheosis of man is less mischievous than the Rationalist doctrine which makes **EVERY MAN GOD UNTO HIMSELF** ; for the Pope is only said to be infallible when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*, that is, when he pronounces the mind of the Church. But the Rationalist Modernist, who makes the judgment of the individual the determinant of what is true in the Bible, in effect places every individual in the throne of God ; and no man can under this system speak to another man of any doctrine as the message of God. All he can say is : " I bow my knee before the Divine Throne of your judgment, and await the Final Verdict of your Divine Authority whether your Infallibility can recognise this message as the Truth of God or not." Seeing that according to this view the decision of every man is final, there can be no corporate message for those who believe this doctrine of Individual Infallibility to proclaim. For those who accept this doctrine the Christian Creed is swept away, and it is absurd, if this be accepted as truth, for any man to ascend the pulpit and proclaim "*God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*" In view of these doctrines of the deification of what is called " the Inward Light," it is absurd for the Church any longer to profess that she has this commission from God, " Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to **OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I**—[a Jewish rabbi with an intellect clouded by the fantastic notions of an unscientific age]—have commanded you."

At the approaching Conference when the whole doctrinal position of Wesleyan Methodism will be before the Conference, when the report of the Committee on doctrine will be presented, the question at stake will be this :—*Is Wesleyan Methodism prepared to surrender the doctrine of the Final and Absolute Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and of Holy Scripture ?* Without disclosing the contents of that report we call attention to the fact that the presentation of that report obviously raises the whole question of our

doctrinal position in the nature of the case, and those who stand for Modernist doctrine will be sure to contend for a pronouncement of such an interpretation of our doctrinal pledges as will comprehend them, and will legitimize their position.

Christians, Awake!

REV. HAROLD C. MORTON, B.A.

Methodism is approaching her second great doctrinal crisis; it may be a fatal crisis; and we call upon her members to arouse themselves lest it be "too late" when Conference has passed.

During the past year the divergencies of belief among us have been admitted. Last Conference the mover of the resolution, that a Committee be appointed on the doctrinal question, did so on the expressed ground that the departures from our doctrines, of which complaint was made, were not sporadic and individual but rather characterised great numbers, perhaps the bulk, of our ministers. A further admission of the disunity was given in the very title of the Committee appointed; it was a "Committee to seek to secure . . . a true and abiding unity of spirit and doctrine." We should not seek to secure unity if we had it already. That disunity of doctrine has not to our knowledge been questioned since Conference, and has been recognised and abundantly exemplified in the Committee itself.

It is in view of that acknowledged disunion that Conference will be asked to deal with the doctrinal position. Let our laymen take earnest notice of both these facts—for nothing concerns them so much as doctrine. Conference is going to be asked to deal with doctrine; and to deal with it in view of the acknowledged departures from the teaching of our Standards.

Every statement made by Conference should be carefully weighed in view of the situation which forms its setting. Statements may seem quite admissible as general statements which are full of error and evil when made concerning a special situation. For example, if I were to say that the

English electorate is upon the whole sound and free from corruption—that might be true enough. But if I made the statement in view of a wide-spread effort to manipulate constituencies in the German interest, it would be a very perilous statement; and if I went on to say that being sound, no action was needed to counteract German influence, that would be not only perilous but disastrous. Let everyone view any proposals made to Conference in the light of the fact that very many ministers and laymen are denying, or modifying, and often substantially modifying, some of the fundamental doctrines of Methodism. It is against the background of wide-spread departures from the Faith that the coming proposals are advanced. That is the dark background of the proposals; and *generalities* for dealing with such a situation are useless and worse than useless. **High-sounding general statements** are only misty spectacles which will blur our eyesight, or in other words will not deal with but **only cover up the ruinous facts.**

The danger is that Conference will yield to the clamour for slackened doctrine, and take a course which covers up our differences and says in effect, "Go as you please."

Many to-day single out a portion of the Methodist system of doctrine and thank God because they believe we are united on that portion. They omit the other portion. On that other portion there is wide, deep, ruinous disunion. So nothing is said about it, and they thank God for the rest! But upon what ground are they justified in differentiating between the various parts of the one system of our doctrine? All the parts are in our Standards, and all the parts are parts of one whole. The parts they fix on are the parts *immediately* concerned with the experience of personal salvation. But there are other parts of the system which though not so immediately concerned are just as truly concerned with personal experience. The doctrine of the Trinity is as truly though not as immediately concerned with the Christian experience as is the doctrine of the witness, of the Spirit. Why single out a part of the Methodist system and say "We care about this but we do not care about the rest."? As well say "We care about the flowers but we do not care about the roots." The Hindu proverb says the bird on the bough professed itself quite content with the bough it rested on, and said that the wood-cutter might do what he liked with

the stem of the tree. Those who would like every man to do much as he pleases with the doctrines of the Fall and Human Nature and Universalism and Final Retribution; just as much as those who would like every man to be left to formulate for himself the doctrines of the Trinity, and the Pre-Existence of our Lord, and His Virgin Birth, provided he will continue to hold the "doctrines of redemption"—these are professing their satisfaction with their own bough and its flowers, and their indifference to the other boughs and the stem and the roots of the One Great Tree of Truth.

"We are united upon the authority of Scripture" is a statement often daringly made to-day. The Methodist Standards say that the Scriptures are our final court of appeal, unerring, infallible. Some of us believe that and preach it. Others say that the Scriptures are full of errors, and myths, and false statements, and bewildering contradictions, and mistaken quotations. Even our Lord Himself, they blasphemously say, made mistakes in His teaching,—and He is the soul of Scripture. Where is the unity here? We need to go very deep to find it, one enthusiastic exponent of our unity admitted recently. Truly we have to go very deep: and it is possible that when we get to the very depth of their sub-conscious minds there will be found even in our most rabid modernists a sentiment of respect for Scripture which they learnt at their mother's knee and which survives from their days of innocence. But this deeply-hidden sentiment is quite inconsistent with their present-day views upon the Word of God; and it is far **too daring a jest** to say that this sentiment unites us all with respect to the authority of Scripture.

Others fix upon the doctrines of Redemption, and say we are all united there. They think we all believe in the Atonement through the Death of Jesus Christ Our Lord, in forgiveness of sins and in Regeneration, in *conscious* salvation, and *entire* sanctification. But even on these subjects there are many illustrations of the differences which exist amongst us: and the differences become more glaring when we ask the question—"Redemption from what?" For that question opens up the other and less popular side of the doctrines of Redemption, such as Total Depravity, God's wrath, and Everlasting Punishment. **The differences upon the doctrines of Redemption are already wide and are**

ever increasing because of the laxity of Conference and its persistent refusal to maintain the Truth

I have frequently found also a recognition of differences which is almost as misleading, to those who do not really understand the situation, as is the affirmation of our "unity." For differences are sometimes admitted, but they are defined in such a way as to suggest that, while there are differences, there is nothing at all to be troubled about. The differences are utterly minimised. First it is continually said that they are only differences of "*interpretation*." **That word covers a multitude of doctrinal sins**, some of them of the deepest dye. "The interpretation of Scripture" sounds so innocent a source of differences of opinion: but the modernist theologian commonly means by it the modification and even the contradiction of the teaching of Scripture. Or again, it is said that the differences concern "the bearing of the interpretation of Scripture upon modern problems." What this means is very doubtful: it sounds innocent and unavoidable. But, suppose the "modern problem" is that of the limitation of knowledge in our Lord, and suppose that the "bearing of the interpretation of Scripture" upon it means that we need not accept every statement and implication of our Lord's words, because we may "interpret" Scripture in such a way that it shall not shut out the theory of our Lord's fallibility—then in such a case the innocent sound covers a very disastrous mishandling of Scripture.

The real questions at issue are:—Has Methodism a Theology? and can Conference modify and alter that theology to suit modern ideas? The Ordination Service says we have a theology. It speaks plainly of the "system of doctrine" contained in our Standards. It describes that "system of doctrine" as being "in accordance with Holy Scripture"; and so far from allowing that system to be modified or altered, it directs our ministers to be "ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word." That is to say, every Wesleyan minister has, in his life's most solemn hour, affirmed that Methodist doctrine is Scripture doctrine, and that he will give all faithful diligence to banish everything which is contrary to it. To modify Wesleyan doctrine is to modify Scripture.

There *is* a Methodist theology, called in the Ordination

Service "the system of doctrine." Those who want to modify it talk about a "*general* system." What difference of attitude or of fact is the adjective meant to supply? Manifestly the opposite of "general" is "particular." They desire to retain a type of doctrine of the general type of the Wesleyan Methodist, but to reject the *particular* system which the Standards supply. **Is this maintaining those Standards, or manipulating them?** Is it defending them, or departing from them? The Standards do not provide a "general system of doctrine" but a particular system.

Suppose anyone said, "The Standards do not provide a system of theology"—that would be manifestly false. They do provide one: the Ordination Service says they do: and everybody knows they do. But I might safely and truly say: "The Standards do not provide a *speculative* system of theology." But if I, desiring to modify Methodist theology, said the Standards do not provide a speculative theology, meaning thereby to cover up the fact that they *do* provide a very definite system of theology, although not a speculative one, what form of speech should I be using? I should be immediately accused of Jesuitical practices, of making a statement which is verbally true in order to suggest a statement which is substantially false: and I do not think I should be able to defend myself from the charge.

The general object is to maintain that the doctrines of salvation and the experience of salvation are all that matters. But these are the flowers of the Plant of Renown, whose stem and roots are just as vital as its fruits and flowers—indeed possibly even more so. The Fall is the Scripture account of how human nature became depraved. That depravity is the basis of other doctrines, such as that of Vicarious Atonement. Regeneration and Adoption are firmly based upon human depravity and divine rejection and condemnation of the unregenerate. Eternal punishment is the outcome of the rejection of the destiny of blessing which the Atonement has won for us. Entire sanctification searches the deep places of the heart, and, because they need it, offers cleansing. Thus the doctrine of the Fall matters a very great deal; it is at the basis of the doctrines of salvation; yet those who talk about the doctrines of redemption as the only things which matter, quite commonly deny the doctrine of the Fall. The whole

Methodist system of doctrine rests upon the Trinity; and this latter doctrine cannot be proved to us apart from the Bodily Resurrection; and equally the doctrine of the Trinity depends upon the Infallibility of our Lord, since an erring God is a contradiction in terms. There are those among us who imagine they can take the bright truths without the dark; that there can be sunshine without shadow. They pick out the comfort from the Scriptures, and shut their eyes to the warnings of eternal judgment. **They think that this half-message, much like a parody of the Bible, is all that Methodism is concerned with!** They even imagine sometimes that we can have Redemption without the Trinity, a Victorious Redeemer whose dust still lies in an undiscovered grave, and a Christian experience which has nothing more solid to rest upon than a human philosophy of God. So they want to banish the idea that there is a very definite and particular system of Methodist theology, and only affirm a *General* system, which seems to be any scheme of theology in which it is possible to include the message that mankind may be redeemed and have an experience of salvation.

But they generally try to fortify their objections to parts of the Methodist theology by asking whether the 20th century is to be wrapped up in the graveclothes of the 18th? or more ghastly still, "gripped by the dead hand of the 18th century." The assumption of this is that our Standards are not in accord with Scripture. If they were, would any one dare to speak of them as a dead hand? Why should we be bound by our Standards and their particular system of theology? Simply and only because they are in harmony with Scripture. We have definitely, and with every species of solemnity accepted them, not because they were written by John Wesley, but because they are a correct statement of Scripture doctrine. Indeed, they are so largely in the exact language of Scripture that we might truly say that they are in large part a transcript of Scripture. Is Scripture the "dead hand," or the grave clothes, of the 18th century? It cannot be too clearly understood that to modify our doctrines is to modify what we have repeatedly and solemnly declared to be the teachings of Scripture. It is not to shake off a dead hand, but to shake off the hand of God. It is not to put away grave clothes, but to put away the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

If the Standards are not in accordance with the Scriptures, plain and straightforward men would say : Let them be altered. We ought not to continue to affirm that they are in accordance with Scripture, while we at the same time believe that in some respects they are not.

But say some : " Is it not the Spirit of God, who is guiding God's Church into new truths " ? I should reply : **Does the Spirit guide us to contradict the Scriptures ?** Did God's Spirit lead John Wesley to understand the Scriptures in one sense, and does He now lead some of us to understand them in the same sense, and some of us to understand them in a different one ? Is God a God of such confusion ? To put down all the vagaries of human speculation and preference to the guidance to the Spirit of God, and thus to make the Spirit of God contradict His own teachings, is a very terrible impiety. And to argue that because the guidance of the Spirit was promised to those who " abide in Christ's Word," therefore the Church's defections from Biblical theology are due to the Holy Spirit, is equally terrible. " The Spirit was promised : therefore the Church cannot be wrong," is the kind of logic which just fits the modernist mind. It sounds so well, and at the same time leaves the " living Church " to face any way it pleases. Surely it is in ways like this that the devil wrests the Scripture to his purpose. It is positively sublime in its infinite illogicality—sublimely illogical and satanically comfortable.

Indeed that is the character of a very great deal said to-day about the " living Church." One is inclined to ask, Why this particular catchword about the *living* Church ? The more dead a Church is, the more talk about it being alive. Life is not the special characteristic of our Church at the present time : but as the twelve successive years of our decreases have mounted up, more and more has been heard about " the Living Church." When she is made up exclusively of heads of departments and theological professors, she will have such exuberant vitality that she can dispense with Biblical Standards altogether. For already it is loudly claimed that the " living Church " is able to " interpret " her own Standards. " Interpret " seems to be a chosen watchword of the " living Church." Let us take a few illustrations. The Fall, according to our Standards, was the ruinous event through which sin entered into human hearts. The " inter-

pretation" is that the Fall was that great step upward when Man became aware of moral distinctions. The Standards say a score of times, in language which could not well be more emphatic than it is, that human nature is totally corrupted. The "interpretation" says that man is more good than evil, and needs only in most cases to have his goodness developed. The Standards say that the Scriptures are infallibly true. The "interpretation" says that the Scriptures are full of errors. The Standards say that the Atonement was a vicarious sin-bearing. The "interpretation" leaves out almost everything, and contents itself with saying that the Atonement was a manifestation of the love of God. The Standards say that this life is man's one Probation, and the punishment of the unsaved is final. The "interpretation" says that Man has another probation, and that the punishment of the unsaved is remedial.

Is the Church "living" or "dead" which calls these contradictions "interpretations," proposes to continue to allow them, and angrily resents any attempt to re-assert our thoroughly Scriptural Standards? **Does a "living Church" use misleading language? Does a "living Church" call a contradiction an "interpretation"? Does a "living Church" cover up its departures from our doctrines by calling the very precise, clear, and particular system of Biblical theology contained in our Standards a "general system"? Is it a "living Church" or a "dead Church" which shuts her eyes even to notorious defections from those very plain Standards, which she has herself for 150 years affirmed to be Scriptural, and which she continues in plain language so to affirm to-day?**

Suppose that Conference were to claim the right to allow all these contradictions of and departures from our Standards, does this make any difference respecting the relation of our ministers to the Standards themselves? Would the Courts of Law, our final and only remaining court of appeal, allow our Trust Deeds to be violated, and yet allow Conference to administer, and relapsing ministers to use, our Trust premises? This is the question which our laymen ought forthwith to test in the Courts, before the situation becomes yet more difficult and desperate.

But the even more important question is this:—What will the individual minister think about it? Will he feel that

he is absolved from strict allegiance to the Standards? Suppose he is one whose sympathies lead him away from some of the teachings of the Standards, will he feel that the decision of Conference means, "Go very much as you please"? The man who says:—"When I say I believe and preach our doctrines, I mean I believe and preach the doctrines now current among us":—will this man feel that his path is clear and his conscience soothed for "Yes" another year. Can there be any doubt that he will? I do not think there can be any doubt at all: and I think that Conference would have practically invited him to salve his conscience in that way.

Christians, awake! Such are some of the vital issues which will come before Conference. **A fatal relaxation of the bonds of doctrinal discipline is quite probable.** No one proposes—apart from ourselves—to purge the body ecclesiastic of the erroneous doctrines which have fixed themselves within her. All admit the "substantial" so-called "modifications" of our doctrines: but no one proposes to deal with them. It is only proposed to cover them with a cloak, lest the searching light of that question, Does he believe and preach our doctrines? disturb the "living Church's" sleep. Again I would call to the Methodist Public: **Christians, awake!**

Atheistic Criticism and Foreign Missions.

REV. CHAS. INWOOD.

"I have had the great privilege of visiting practically all the mission fields of the world, and of coming into touch with much missionary effort and much native Christian life and thought, and I have learned from that experience that the tampering with the Divine inspiration and authority and integrity of the Bible is a grave menace to foreign missionary work. This shows itself in many directions. I believe it is seriously cutting the nerve of what I call spiritual missionary enthusiasm at home. It is certainly inflicting a very subtle injury on some workers in the field. And what concerns and hurts me more than all is that already it is bringing injury and damage to some native pastors and teachers who have been called out of heathenism. Just

imagine, if you can, a native pastor stating publicly that Abraham was a myth. Or think of another, a native tutor in a divinity school, telling the students that they were not to imagine that Philip was 'caught up of the Spirit and landed in Azotus,' as the Acts of the Apostles states, but that Philip hid himself behind a bush, where the eunuch could not see him, and went on his way. Think of one missionary saying to another, 'The writings of Mrs. Eddy are as much inspired as that book you call the Bible'! If this is not criminal, I do not know what is. Even if these men hold these views, to promulgate them among these new native churches is treachery against the missionary ideal and the purpose of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I mention this because I want you to wake up to the peril, and pray God in His mercy to arrest the evil on the mission field as you already pray that God may arrest it in the pulpits at home."

We have published a number of similar statements from missionaries. When it dawns upon us, that in this twentieth century of Christian light, the missionary work for the conversion of the heathen is degenerating into seducing them from Paganism to Infidelity, we apologize to Germany. Hereafter we will feel as if we ought to say of Counterfeit Criticism, "*Made in hell!*" With shame, red-hot with wrath, we recall the *damning* fact, that no Denomination can boast its ignorance; or even dare ask when the modern betrayal of the Son of God is contemplated, "Is it I?" Far better let the heathen die in his sin and fall back on the uncovenanted mercy of God. Will Protestantism have the unmitigated gall to call for scores of millions of money for missions and refuse to denounce and recall from the mission field every Judas who wears the badge of discipleship?—From the *Bible Champion*.

Notes.

Is it Unspiritual to Appeal to the Courts?

When we propose to ask the Courts of Law to put right what unfaithful Conferences and careless Trustees have made wrong, some people at once say: "Keep away from the Courts of Law, because it is a mistake to mix up spiritual and legal matters."

We would ask such people to realise that we are not ourselves proposing to make the admixture. The admixture has been made for us by John Wesley, and all the Methodists who have gone before us. They have based our Church upon a legal basis. Practically all our property is based upon

Trusts modelled upon what we call the "Model Deed." The property is held in Trust for certain spiritual purposes, and those spiritual purposes are safeguarded by Deeds which rest upon the Laws of England. The objection that it is unspiritual to appeal to the Courts to enforce those Deeds is quite inconsistent, and blind to the already existing legal position. The objection should have been raised long, long ago, or not at all. It should have been raised when each separate property, as it was built for Methodist purposes, was placed upon a legal basis. The wisdom of our fathers, and sometimes of ourselves also, thought fit to guard the use of our properties by making it illegal to use them for teachings contrary to the Sermons and Notes on the New Testament which are our Standards of theological belief.

Is a Trust Deed merely a "Bluff"?

Have we all down these generations past, and right up to the present hour, been solemnly indulging in mere bluff? If we have put in the clause guarding our property from being used for what we regard as false teaching, while all the time we have never intended to enforce the clause, then what is that clause but a "game of bluff"? Bluff is not a very admirable thing at any time or anywhere; but when it is indulged in upon questions of the most solemn import, questions which involve the most vital issues of truth and godliness, what words can express the unworthiness of such a course? Such a course involves all our Church Trustees in disregard of the solemn duty of guarding Methodism from error in the precise way in which they have undertaken to guard it. Nor would that course have been prescribed by the legal basis of our Deeds unless it had been realized that recourse to the Courts of Law is the only way in which, finally, our premises can be guarded from improper use.

Let us be perfectly clear upon the matter; we are already legally based, as a Church holding property. Is that unspiritual? At all events from Wesley downwards our most spiritually-minded leaders have seen nothing unspiritual in that course. It cannot be any more unspiritual to enforce a legal provision than it was to make it. But what adjective can be fittingly applied should we refuse to use the very safeguard which we have ourselves chosen? That reduces the doctrinal proviso in our Trust Deeds to a mere bluff.

Legal Barriers and Moral Barriers.

It is the fact that our property is held upon legal conditions, for certain uses and those only, which makes it illegal for Conference to appoint to the use of our properties any ministers (or laymen) who believe and preach things contrary to our Standards of doctrine. A great many illegal appointments are being made year by year. Apart from the question of the conditions upon which *property is held* in Wesleyan Methodism, Conference could not be legally prevented from appointing a Unitarian or a Sacerdotalist or a Spiritualist or a Buddhist to the use of our property. The legal barrier to such improper appointments is that our property is held upon certain legal conditions. No one who "shall maintain, promulgate, or teach, any Doctrine or Practice, contrary to what is contained in certain Notes on the New Testament, commonly reputed to be the Notes of the said John Wesley, and in the first Four Volumes of Sermons, commonly reputed to be written and published by him," can be legally appointed to the use of our properties, or any of them, if they are settled on the Model Deed.

The Legal Barrier only Reinforces the Moral:

That is the legal barrier. But suppose that the legal barrier were removed by the abrogation of our various Trust Deeds, has Conference then

a right to appoint men to use our premises who have departed from the Standards of Doctrine above enumerated? Not at all. The legal barrier would be removed, but the moral barrier would still remain. As a Church, we hold our Doctrines in trust from God Himself, who has revealed them all to us in Holy Scripture. This is made perfectly clear in the Ordination Service, from which we quote the following passages:—

“As you are to exercise your ministry under the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, I have further to enquire, whether you have read the first four volumes of Mr. Wesley’s Sermons, and his Notes on the New Testament; and whether you believe that the system of doctrine therein contained is in accordance with the holy Scriptures?”

“I have read them, and do so believe.”

And again:—

“Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God’s Word; and to use both public and private admonitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?”

“I will, the Lord being my helper.”

The Next Step: a Modern Methodist Bible!

It is quite clear, therefore, that before Conference would be morally at liberty to controvert, or to modify, any part of the system of doctrine which is contained in our Standards—or to allow men who controvert or modify any part of that system to use our property—at the very least it would be necessary to alter the Ordination Service. Even then, the Scriptures would remain unchanged: and all Christians are morally responsible to God for the maintenance of the Scriptures: and it therefore appears, in order to escape from the responsibility of enforcing our Standards, Conference would have to issue a new and emended edition of the Bible. So many emendments have already been made by individual ministers without any effective action being taken by Conference, or even any protest being made by it, that it might be urged that in principle an amended Bible would not be a new departure.

This is “man’s day,” and human pride has attempted again and again, in our own Church and out of it, to correct the Word of God. Since Conference has already allowed a Wesleyan minister, without reproof, to assert that we “must maintain the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus” in order to maintain our own intellectual liberty, there does not seem to be any effectual barrier to the further step of correcting the Scriptures. Having found out that they can correct the Living Word, why should not the Methodist innovators proceed to correct the Written Word, and issue a **New and Modern Methodist Bible?**

The Powers of Darkness Fight for Germany.

Remarks which have frequently been made to us of late show that many minds are beginning to have some glimpse of forces outside the material sphere which are fighting on the side of Germany. Again and again people have shewn by their words a sense that behind the veil, in that realm where things beyond the reach of human agency are decreed, Powers seem to be ordaining these, as we believe, temporary German successes. All our seemingly well-based forecasts have been so many times falsified, and the idea is dawning that Germany has allies beyond the veil.

For us to distinguish between what is wrought by God and what is wrought by the Powers of Darkness, among those events and influences which have kept the German menace still terrible and formidable, is extremely difficult if not impossible. But remembering what the Scriptures

reveal to us regarding the Powers of Darkness ; and remembering also what a firm hold the doctrines of devils have upon Germany, as revealed to us in the overwhelming triumph of Rationalism and the wide acceptance of the foul immorality of the philosophy of Nietzsche, there cannot be any reasonable doubt that the Powers of Darkness are exerting all their forces to secure a German triumph.

Should such a triumph be the ultimate outcome of this war, the greatest and most disastrous result of that triumph would be German infidelity rampant everywhere. It is worth the Devil's while to fight hard to attain such a triumph, and to sacrifice many another and lesser foothold on this planet in order to grip and throttle the faith of humankind at large. Equally it is worth the while of the Christian to wrestle in prayer to avert such a ghastly and disastrous defeat for Faith.

A Conviction that Deepens among Those Who Pray.

It seems evident that among those who have been resolutely giving themselves to prayer with reference to the war, there is a conviction which steadily deepens. We have found it almost invariably among those whose praying is of the type described by the phrase "agonising in prayer." Others, who might perhaps fairly be described as praying people, but whose prayer-life has continued along its accustomed and quiet path, do not seem to have reached the conviction referred to, though they may not show any antipathy to it when it is presented to them. That conviction is—that God will not give victory until there is a real turning to Himself on the part of this nation. They come together to pray for victory over the ruthless invader, and their minds are turned to the moral and spiritual condition of this nation, and of our Allies, and their hearts drawn out in special supplication for national repentance and national faith. That is increasingly "the one idea, which, star-like, lures them on, to its exclusive purpose." No peace without penitence : no triumph without trust in God !

Is it true? That is one of the supreme war questions ! In days to which our own day bears a striking likeness, that was the message God gave to His servant Isaiah :—"When I have wrought my whole work upon Mount Zion and upon Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." No better story for to-day than those two chapters, the ninth and tenth, of Isaiah. The Seer sees God's truth, and our hope is to see through his eyes. Let us get back to the Scriptures.

A Great Lesson of the War.

Many times also the perplexity has been proposed to us that if this warfare is only allowed by God because of the need for moral and spiritual reformation, then the curse of the war is falling least upon those who deserve it most, and most upon those who deserve it least. The younger men, who have least responsibility for the moral and spiritual condition which God designs to remedy, pay the dread price, and the older people go comparatively free.

Perhaps it is worth while to point out that the older people, say for instance those who lose dearly-loved sons or daughters, pay a price perhaps heavier in reality than is paid by the loved ones who fall : and, further, that it would be a very great mistake to put all the responsibility for current errors and evils upon the shoulders of the older portion of the nation. The last twenty years have emphatically been the years of young people's influence. Some young people have thrown over practically all restraint ; and all of them have expected their wishes to be very carefully considered. Therefore it would not be right to assume that all the responsibility rests upon the older portion of the nation by any means.

But surely the great moral is this : that God deals with nations as units, each nation being one corporate whole, and visits nations, as Bishop Butler says, in this present life—inasmuch as nations have no corporate existence in the life to come. Inequalities of many kinds there are bound to be when nations are dealt with in this manner : and though it is not to be questioned that the wondrous Providence of God guards the individual from injustice even when allowing the nation to be judged, yet for us it is necessarily impossible in many cases to see that justice is at work.

Everyone should realise that he or she is in definite reality responsible for the beliefs and policies of the nation ; is liable to be involved in divine dealings with the nation ; and can hardly do anything more unwise than refuse to bear a due share of the burden of directing the national life. Let us hope that in years to come we shall hear no more light-hearted boasts such as, "Oh, I never take any part in politics." That is not a merit, but a sin.

Shall Wesleyan Methodism be Destroyed ?

Some one may be inclined to say : "This question is too absurd for any one to waste a moment in considering it." But we are bold to affirm that there is imminent peril lest a great step should be taken at the approaching Conference in the direction of the annihilation of Wesleyan Methodism. Two questions will be before the Conference, both of which contain within them the germs of dissolution of all that is most essential in Wesleyan Methodism. Those two questions are the scheme for Methodist reunion, and the consideration of the report of the Committee on Unity of Doctrine. The former question involves the surrender of much that is specially characteristic of our Wesleyan Methodist constitution, and no one who is at all acquainted with the doctrinal position of the other Methodist Churches can for a moment think that the United Methodist Church could be based upon John Wesley's Standards. Without anticipating the nature of the report of the Committee on Unity of Doctrine, we may say that the report of that Committee must obviously raise the whole doctrinal position. That position is most critical. This is plain without any reference to what has transpired in the Committee. We wish we could get all the members of the W.B.U. fully to realize what the positions at stake are. It is unquestionable that doctrines are being taught both in our pulpits and in our literature that are subversive of the very foundations of the Christian Faith, doctrines that teach the people to doubt the Bible, and that set forth such a view of the Person of Jesus Christ as makes it possible to ascribe error to Him, and teaches men to pay Divine honours to a teacher whose doctrines are inferior to those who set themselves up as His critics. It is the settlement of this question which the Wesleyan Methodist Church is now called upon to face. The way in which the Conference will deal with this doctrinal question involves the maintenance or destruction of Wesleyan Methodism. Which is it to be ? This question will be decided by the attitude of the people quite as much as by the Conference. The members of our Union must not leave this to the officials of the Union, but should help us by enthusiastic public support of our principles.

What can members of the W B U. do to save Methodism ?

First we would say **PRAY . . . PRAY . . . PRAY**. Then we would say : Brethren and sisters, let us lead the Methodist life as expressed in John Wesley's famous saying : "A Methodist is a man who does all the good he **CAN** ; at all the times he **CAN** ; in all the places he **CAN** ; in all the ways he **CAN** ; to all the people he **CAN**." Let us strive to our utmost to bring to pass a world-wide revival of religion, publishing the Methodist Evangel for all we are worth. Let us do all we can to multiply the member-

ship of the W.B.U., and awaken the Church to the seriousness of the Modernist apostasy which is working such terrible havoc throughout Christendom, the full ripe fruit of which is to be seen in Germany, but which is producing kindred results everywhere else wherever it prevails. One of the ways in which members may do effective service is to supply funds for the propaganda of the Union.

The Young People and Modernism.

We are frequently told that young people with their modern education and culture cannot be expected to tolerate the Gospel preached by Wesley and his coadjutors. There is, perhaps, a small modicum of truth in this statement, viz., this: that the message for every age must be stated in the dialect of the age. But when this is applied to the early Methodist preaching, we challenge the production of the evidence that there is any appreciable gulf between the modes of expression and of thought of the eighteenth century and the present. If the education of the present has produced in the minds of the young any antipathy to the revelation of God, so much the worse for that education. All this talk about the superior culture of the present having lifted men above the message of John Wesley is humbug. Very few men of our acquaintance have ever come within sight of the culture of the Wesleys and John Fletcher. We demand to know wherein any discoveries of modern thought have made it necessary to change any main doctrine of the Christian Faith. Will those who make these affirmations have the goodness to say what are the doctrines of the Church which modern research has discredited, and will they definitely state what is the new message for the salvation of the lost which the Modernist Apostle can offer to perishing souls?

What have the Modernists to shew as the fruit of their message?

The policy of concessions to public taste, amongst which consideration of what must be done to win the young, has been very prominent in Wesleyan Methodism during the last forty years. What has been the fruit? During the last twenty years this spirit of opportunist compromise with worldliness has been pouring in upon us like a deluge, manifesting itself in two kindred directions, viz., in the adoption of a conciliatory attitude to worldly amusements, some of which are of a very dubious character, others obviously sinful, and in the avoidance of doctrines which are unpalatable to the carnal and worldly taste. What has been the result? The idea has been to throw open the door of Church membership so as to make it easier for those who will not bear the closer spiritual test to find a place amongst us, and to increase our congregations by bidding for popularity with those to whom the claims of Bible doctrine are repulsive. Has this policy accomplished the aims of promoters? In all the Churches (for this courting of the world has pervaded all the Churches) this policy of playing to the gallery has led to a decrease in membership, a decrease in Sunday schools, and a decrease in congregations. Decay all along the lines has been the accompaniment of this attempt to serve God and mammon. The old much despised methods of our fathers drew large congregations and were the means of large numbers of conversions. The new methods of man-pleasing are failures from the point of view with which they have been adopted. Many years ago there was a noble passage in one of the Conference Pastoral Addresses deprecating these attempts to win the people by carnal compromises. In that paragraph this sentence occurred: "*You cannot propitiate the carnal mind.*" You cannot. That mind is enmity against God. Attempts to propitiate it are only contributory to the increase of that

enmity. They are pouring oil upon the fire of antagonism to Christian truth. A Church that practises them is a propagandist of infidelity and of the spirit of antichrist. This is demonstrated by the decay of the Church which has accompanied the conversion of the Churches to so large an extent into what Joseph Cook of Boston, U.S.A., so aptly called *Sunday Clubs*.

Is Rehoboamism to Rule the Church ?

The constant cry that everything must be subordinated to the aim of seeking to captivate the young is nothing short of sickening. There is, of course, a great truth in it. It is of supreme importance to *save* the young. The future of the world lies with the young, and it is the Church's first duty to direct her utmost efforts to secure the *conversion* of the young. But this aim is the very opposite of the policy of listening to the clamour of young unregenerate worldlings for a Church that shall gratify their tastes. The history of Rehoboam has been given to us in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost to shew us what will come if the young, like the wild ass of the desert, are allowed to take the bit in their mouths and with whirlwind velocity sweep the Church away into the wilderness of carnal corruption. The plea often set up is that modern education makes it impossible for the young to accept the teachings of John Wesley's Standards. This is an attempt to make secular educationists, many of whom are open antagonists to Christianity, the directors of the message of the Church. Our Lord warned us against this when He said : " I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes " (Matt. 11²⁵ ; Luke 10²¹). The history of human thought shews us how constantly the universities of the world have been the hot-beds of the most dangerous and most absurd errors. The wisdom of God has found its home not amongst the learned but amongst the poor who have had the Gospel preached to them. " The foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that *not many wise men after the flesh*, not many mighty, not many noble are called : but God hath chosen the *foolish things of the world to confound the wise* ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are : that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption " (I Cor. 1²⁶⁻³⁰). The Church must not allow herself to be ruined by accepting the dictation of young university prigs stuffed up to the nozzle with the latest new theories of the school of Mr. Man's-Invention. We need to raise the cry : "*Beware of the School of Rehoboamites !* "

A Christless Education one of the Greatest Perils of the World.

The present war is a scourge of judgment that has fallen upon the world through the adoption of an education that shuts God out of account. *German Kultur* is proving to be the consummation of degraded brutal savagery. God is endeavouring to shew the world what is the fruit of a Godless education, and He is allowing the nation in which learning without God is most generally diffused to shew mankind that the worst criminals are book-learned villains. But the nominally Christian nations are blind to the lesson. We are still bent on thrusting into the forefront a purely secular education, and even professed Christian teachers are saying in effect : *You must model your Christian doctrine to harmonize with the teachings of the*

modern schools of learning. If you wish to retain the young, you must accommodate the teachings of the Church to the teachings of the schools. This is really to say : *Abandon the revelation of God, and follow the speculations of men.* This is Nietzscheanism. As we have already said in these columns, this invasion of German thought is worse than an invasion of German armies. If Jesus Christ is in very deed the revelation of "all the fulness of the Godhead" (Col. 2⁹), we must insist that the schools must be ruled by Christian doctrine, not that Christian doctrine must be ruled by the schools. The greatest foes of real truth are learned fools puffed up with vain conceit of their own greatness. All along the ages the greatest enemies of real truth have been found amongst the circles of the learned, and the deadliest mischiefs have been wrought by learned misleaders of mankind. We must marshal all the real disciples of Christ to do battle against the arrogant pretensions of a "science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6²⁰), against the pretensions of a scholasticism which the Holy Ghost speaking by Paul has taught us proceeds from men who because "they knew not God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **PROFESSING THEMSELVES TO BE WISE, THEY BECAME FOOLS**" (Rom. 1^{21, 22}).

The Value of our Chapel Deeds.

We increasingly feel the sadness of the violation of the law by the misappropriation of property for the promulgation of doctrines contrary to our Standards. We wonder at the patience of Wesleyan Methodist trustees who are loyal to the faith. Surely, if there is no other means of redress, our faithful people will test the question in the Law Courts as to whether the law of England will sanction such violation of Trusts.

The Doctrinal Question in the Synods.

We have received the following communications concerning the Doctrinal questions in the May Synods :—

THIRD LONDON.

Rev. W. T. Gill, who has rendered conspicuous service to the cause represented by the W.B.U. from the commencement of this controversy, followed the course taken by him in previous years, he stated, when the doctrinal question was put, that he was "unable to answer in the affirmative." In the absence of the Chairman of the Synod, Dr. Scott Lidgett, who was attending a meeting of the London County Council, the business of which we deemed specially to require his presence, Rev. Joseph Dixon was in the Chair, and he proposed Mr. Gill to explain the significance of his answer. Mr. Gill replied : "Last year when I attempted to make an explanation, I was immediately ruled out of order. This year I decline—I have nothing more to say." The next name was called and so the business went forward.

This incident is very significant. Should not inquiry be made in Conference whether all the members of the Third London Synod answered the doctrinal question satisfactorily, and whether there was not one member of the Synod who

refused to answer the question in the affirmative? We, of course, know that our Brother Gill does most whole-heartedly believe and preach the doctrines of our Standards. The position he takes is that while he does believe and preach our doctrines he does not accept the sense which the Conference attaches to the answer to the doctrinal question as expressed in its decision in the Jackson case.

DEVONPORT AND PLYMOUTH.

When the doctrinal question was asked Rev. Harold C. Morton, B.A., distinguished between the real doctrines of our Standards and those doctrines as modified by the ideas rife among us, and affirmed his adherence to the real doctrines of our Church.

In the Conversation on the report of the Spiritual Advance Committee, the Chairman ruled that we should take a wide outlook and include anything we should wish to say regarding the work of God in general. But as soon as Mr. Morton began to speak, he ruled that the Conversation on the work of God should be separate. Mr. Morton therefore spoke in the Conversation on the work of God, emphasising the pulpit as the one strategic point where supreme effort might yet win successes for the Kingdom of God; and calling attention to the many things which are weakening our pulpit to-day—especially the growing chaos of contradictory doctrine which is heard from the Wesleyan pulpit; which now begins to include Romanising doctrine as well as the assaults upon Scripture and upon our Lord which have become epidemic already. One speaker in the Conversation called attention to the fact that every young minister in the district, save one, was absent from the Synod; and Mr. Dyer and Captain Bennetts both referred to Biblical preaching, the preaching of a perfect Christ and a perfect Bible, as the only preaching which would tell for God and His Christ.

BIRMINGHAM AND SHREWSBURY.

In the absence of Dr. Tasker the Chair was occupied by Rev. H. B. Cowl, who ruled that the questions on doctrine and discipline should be taken together. Our brother only insisted on answering them separately.

We think this disposition to merge the two questions is a tendency that should be definitely resisted. We must do all in our power to keep to the front the primary importance of the Church's message. Our doctrinal integrity is the matter that occupies the first place in our constitution. Everything depends upon it. This is true in all Churches. *No Church is worth anything, except as its one supreme work is to convey to mankind the revelation of God.* While this is true of all Churches, it is specially true of a Connexional Church, and particularly of a Connexional Church with a united pastorate. When antagonistic doctrines are proclaimed from the same pulpits by the ministers of the Circuit, we

have arrived at an intolerable position ; in such cases the Church is reduced to a condition of anarchic confusion, and every congregation becomes an arena of theological controversy. One man may be teaching the people that the teachings of the Bible are infallible and final. In the same pulpit there may be a colleague (save the mark ! How can he be called a colleague ?) who declares that the Bible is a book in which the truth of God is *contained* in a solution of error which every reader must discriminate for himself. What is the condition of a flock which is under the pastorate of such antagonistic shepherds ? What also can we expect of the ethics of Churches some of whose pastors openly flout doctrines to which in their ordination vows and annual Synod declarations they are solemnly pledged ? We must not allow the procedure of our Synods to be such as to obscure the importance of the doctrinal question.

HALIFAX AND BRADFORD.

So much time was occupied in this Synod in the discussion of the relation of the Christian ministry to the Man-Power Bill, the State-Purchase of the Liquor Traffic, and other questions, that it was found impossible to secure attention to the direct question of doctrine. Rev. G. Armstrong Bennetts, B.A., did, however, speak briefly on the subject when the question of Methodist Reunion was before the Synod, pointing out that he could see no method by which our doctrinal integrity could be preserved in any scheme for Methodist Reunion. He also referred to the subject in a few passing remarks when the Report of the Spiritual Advance Committee was before the Synod. That Report is a remarkable document dealing with The Message, the Reconstruction of Society, and Conduct and Devotion. In Mr. Bennetts's opinion the definite note of the Methodist Message is not sufficiently clearly expressed in the section dealing with that subject. The great central truths of the Evangelical Faith are not in this section expressed with adequate sharpness and emphasis, especially in these times when so many anti-christian teachers are teaching the people to disbelieve the Bible, and even to attribute error to our Lord Himself. It is only fair to say, however, that the defects of the section on the Message are to a considerable extent redeemed by passages in the sections on the Reconstruction of Society and Conduct and Devotion, in which last there is much glowing and emphatic insistence upon some aspects of Christian Faith and Experience. But Mr. Bennetts's suggestion was that in the section dealing with the Message itself there should have been a more definite affirmation of the most prominent elements of the Gospel committed to our trust, so that there should be no room for imagining that this Committee was leaving the door open for the acceptance of a new theology which abandons and contradicts the doctrines that have made Methodism. But he had no time in which to do more than barely suggest this view.

Does He Believe and Preach our Doctrines ?

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

In the last number of this *Journal* I dealt with some aspects of our doctrinal pledges, and endeavoured to shew that, if there is no doctrinal unity in a Church, there is no cohesive force of any real value to hold it together. There are those who would agree with this statement in terms, but who, nevertheless, are so eager that Wesleyan Methodism should be what they call a *comprehensive* Church that they seek for an interpretation of the doctrinal pledges which will give room, not merely for minor differences in statement, but for wide doctrinal divergences. They maintain that there may be a loyal agreement with what they would call the general type of our doctrine, while, at the same, time there may be even direct disagreement with the Standards on some matters ; and they plead for wide liberty of judgment as to what the answer to the doctrinal question really means. Those of whom I speak would maintain that a man may legitimately claim that he does believe and preach our doctrines, even though there may be some of the doctrines plainly taught in the Standards which he definitely rejects, and even though he may make substantial modifications in respect of some of those doctrines which are unquestionably taught in the Standards.

It seems to me that this view is nothing but a form of the Jesuitical doctrine of reserve, a doctrine which in effect reduces all pledges to the category of "mere scraps of paper." A contract is valueless if it is to be said that its real meaning is not what its words seem to imply, but its meaning is only what the contractor in the secrecy of his own mind chooses to say that it means. The value of a contract is that it shall mean the same thing to the man who enters into the contract and those with whom he makes the contract.

With whom is the contract of the Wesleyan Minister made ? I reply : With the Church, with his brethren in the ministry, and with the public. I can quite think some may demur to the statement that his contract is made with the public, and may ask what right the public has in this contract.

I should say this : A man who is selecting a congregation in which to worship, if he is a reasonable man, will ask : "What are I and my family likely to hear in that place of worship?" He may say : "Well, there can be no doubt what I shall hear in a Wesleyan Methodist Church, because its preachers are pledged to a definite doctrinal position." If when he attends that place of worship, his children are taught things contrary to what those pledges definitely led him to expect, he will feel that he has been deceived, and that a contract made with him as one of the public has been violated.

The element of the contract as an agreement with his brother ministers is very serious and important, especially in a united pastorate in which the colleagues occupy the same pulpits. Here is a man who feels that the very foundation-stone of His message is that Jesus Christ is very God, and that every word of His is the absolute and authoritative word of God. He enters the ministry with the confidence that, whatever differences there may be between himself and his colleagues, every man with whom he will be appointed to labour will believe and preach this doctrine. But he finds himself yoked up with a man who says : "Oh, no ! My doctrine of the Incarnation is a substantial modification of the doctrine of the Standards on this point. I believe that Jesus of Nazareth often spoke from the standpoint of the errors of His age and nation." Such a man will reasonably be hurt by a violation of a compact without the existence of which a colleagueship is intolerable, and he will feel that his ministry in its very heart and centre is being countered by his colleague. Some men talk about "the brotherhood" being a sufficient solvent for disagreements such as these, that if the proper brotherhood feeling exists, the brotherhood will override doctrinal differences. This is as if a man should say because in a family two men are brothers, this fact of kinship would lead a man to go on in fellowship relations with a brother who slanders the mother whom he dearly loves. Our Lord has given us the answer to these sentimental appeals to brotherly toleration of fundamental error : "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12⁵⁰). To continue in fellowship with a teacher who traduces the Scriptures and discrowns our Lord is to be a "partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John xi.).

The doctrinal pledges are a contract with the Church. A united pastorate, the members of which antagonize each other's teaching, is an utter pretence of unity. Such a pastorate will do nothing but keep the Church in a perpetual condition of chaotic uncertainty and internal conflict. Under conditions like these, simple trustful souls are in peril of becoming the easy prey of the wolves in sheep's clothing, who under the profession of adherence to a definite system of doctrine "**CREEP**" (2 Tim. 3⁶) into the midst of the flock, and "lead captive" the unwary by their cunning sophistries. In this sphere "the confidence trick" works unspeakable ravages. I myself must confess that I was blinded till 1913 by my firm confidence in the validity of the doctrinal pledges of my brethren. When I was told that there were Wesleyan Ministers, and not a few of them, who rejected doctrines explicitly taught in our Standards, I always used to reply: "You are mistaken. Do you know what you are doing? You are charging these good men with false ordination vows, and with making false doctrinal affirmations at every May Synod. You mean that you have heard these men of whom you speak discussing these views and stating the arguments by which those who teach them support them, and you have mistakenly supposed that they were stating their own views." But the Conference of 1913 revealed that I had been living in a delusion, and that there are those in the Wesleyan Ministry who hold doctrines palpably antagonistic to the plain teachings of our Standards, and who answer the doctrinal question in the Synod with such reserve that no transparent-minded man can understand the method by which they reconcile it with their consciences.

"*Truce-breaking*" is one of the characteristics which the Holy Spirit speaking by Paul declares will be found in the antichristian teachers of the last times. (2 Tim. 3³). How the world is suffering from this in the political sphere at the hands of Germany we all know. But what is to be expected if solemn vows made in the Church of God are treated as mere "scraps of paper," and evacuated of all binding force by a statement that the individual minister holds himself at liberty to select such portions of the Standards as he pleases for exclusion from his doctrinal pledge when he gives it; and this in face of the fact that the Model Deed expressly says that "**NOTHING CONTRARY**" to the Standards may be

promulgated or taught on our premises? The ethical effect of such teaching as this in the Church is seen in German falsehood and repudiation of treaty pledges. If a theologian may give pledges which he invalidates by unexpressed reserves in his own mind, then surely a politician may do the same without blame. The appalling ethical issues of trifling with pledges made at the altar of God it is impossible to estimate.

It may be said that a man may hold the general system of doctrine contained in our Standards but may omit some doctrines. I reply :—The Model Deed says **"NOTHING CONTRARY,"** and I think this settles the question as to what our doctrinal pledge means. I wish here to guard myself against misunderstanding. I have always felt that John Wesley shewed his wisdom in fixing Standards that do not seek to base our doctrinal integrity on the small technicalities of brief formularies, which contentious precisians may easily use for vexatious heresy-hunting. Our Church has through the spacious breadth of our Standards been mercifully preserved from this. No man would contend more eagerly than I against any approach to the litigious insistence upon doctrinal pin-points. But I do maintain that, if pledges mean anything, every Wesleyan Minister and Local Preacher is solemnly pledged to *every* doctrine that is clearly and definitely taught in our Standards, and that no violation of this principle is consistent with doctrinal unity. For instance, supposing it is legitimate for each man to select one doctrine of the Standards which he repudiates, then it is easily understandable that in the Legal Hundred, each man of the 100 might select a different section of the system for repudiation. In that case, where would our doctrinal system be in the Legal Hundred?

Finally, I hold that the Truth of God is not a system of isolated fragments strung together, but is one fabric woven from the top without seam throughout. No one main doctrine of Bible-truth can be surrendered without rending the fabric. Dr. Pope used constantly to insist upon this, and one of the supreme excellencies of his masterly *Compendium* is the way in which he sets forth the truth as a great temple in which each part is complementary and supplementary to every other part. The system of Christian truth is a circle: remove any one truth and you produce a gap in the circumference of the

circle which invalidates the whole. One of the strongest demonstrations of the Divine authorship of the Bible is to be found in the absolute perfection of this marvellous edifice of truth which is found in this library written over a period of 1,500 years, consisting of 67 books of every type of literature, composed in the most varied environment, by some 40 known authors of very different ranks in society, and a considerable number of unknown authors. Alexander Von Humboldt's idea expressed in his great book, "*The Cosmos*," applies with even greater truth to the realm of Christian theology. Humboldt said that the different sciences were the result of the limitations of the human mind, and that if our mind were great enough to grasp the whole, we should understand that there is only one science, the science of the Universe, and that every science is woven into an indissoluble fabric with every other, and that every science requires every other for its elucidation. The same thing is true with even stronger emphasis of that body of truth contained in the Revelation of God which God Himself has declared is presented to us as **ONE** in Him Who is "the Alpha and the Omega," "the First and the Last," "the Beginning and the End," "the Faithful Witness," "the All and in All," "in Whom dwelleth All the Fulness of the Godhead bodily." He Himself has taught us that every "jot and tittle" of the fabric is of importance, and has pronounced His stern condemnation upon any man who shall belittle any part of that fabric of Divine truth, concerning which He declared that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10³⁶).

The Proposed Free Church Federation.

THE DECLARATORY STATEMENT OF FAITH.

REV. J. MOUNTAIN, D.D.

If five or six commercial companies were negotiating with a view to a combination of their several businesses, one can easily imagine the care with which they would proceed. The Directors would meet for conference. A full disclosure of assets and liabilities would be made. Articles of Association would be drawn up; and everything, under

legal guidance, would be done to secure the utmost explicitness, to the satisfaction of the shareholders and of everyone concerned.

One would, therefore, have expected that at least as much caution and explicitness would be manifested in regard to the doctrinal basis of the proposed Federation of the Evangelical Free Churches. But, alas! as our Lord said: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light!"

After a careful and an impartial examination of the Declaratory Statement of Faith, it will be evident that the Statement is unworthy of its name. It possesses neither explicitness nor reasonable completeness.

The Committee on Faith was heterogeneous—orthodox and heterodox, evangelical and otherwise. They not only represented Faith, but also various kinds of unbelief. Some members of the Committee scouted the very idea of a creed; while others determined that a creed was a necessity. When a creedal basis had, at length, been decided upon, one member objected to this doctrine being included, and another objected to that. And so on and so on. The problem, therefore, was, how to reconcile these divergences, and to produce some kind of nominal agreement in spite of such manifest disunion.

After waiting for about six months for the preparation of the Statement, the Committee met for their third and final session. Professor Carnegie Simpson presented the Statement, which was duly accepted; and, in due time, it has been adopted by the Baptist and Congregational Assemblies. The Presbyterian Synod, however, has wisely referred the whole project to the presbyteries.

So far, a merely nominal unity has been secured at the cost of Truth, and that, indeed, by ambiguity of statement, and by omission of some of the most essential doctrines of the Christian Faith.

This will be evident from the following considerations, as we examine the Declaratory Statement:—

1. The Bible is said to "*contain*" the Word of God, instead of an affirmation being made that it *really IS the Word of God*.

2. There is no definite affirmation of the essential Deity of our blessed Lord.

3. The definition of the Holy Trinity is so ambiguous that it may be adopted by any modern Unitarian, and, indeed, it would have been acceptable to the ancient Sabellians.

4. The following essential facts and doctrines concerning our Lord are not even mentioned :—

- (1) His Virgin Birth.
- (2) His Absolutely Sinless Nature and Life.
- (3) His Infallibility as Teacher.
- (4) His Bodily Resurrection.
- (5) His High Priesthood and Intercession.
- (6) His Personal and Visible Second Advent.

5. Viewing the doctrinal part of the Statement as a whole, it is a resurrection of ancient Arianism, under the modern title of THE UNITED FREE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

6. The above points are important, in themselves considered ; but their importance is vastly increased when we bear in mind that they are the very points around which the widespread unbelief of to-day is raging. In fact, at this very time, a petition to the Bishops of the Church of England is being extensively signed, drawing their attention to the unbelief of many of the clergy ; and mentioning, in particular, the doctrines of the Virgin Birth and the Bodily Resurrection of our Lord as being rejected or called in question.

7. And let no one imagine, because the Committee on Faith make a reference to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, that, by so doing, they have endorsed and embodied those Creeds in the Declaratory Statement. For—

(1). The reference is made only in the Preamble, which can pledge nobody ;

(2). The terms of the reference are worthless ; for the Committee therein do not say that they *accept* those Creeds, but merely that they “ claim and cherish their place as *inheritors* ” of them. But those Creeds are matters of history, and, as such, are “ inherited ” by everyone. The question, therefore, is, not whether the Committee “ *inherit* ” those Creeds, but whether they believe them. And evidently, as a whole, they do not ; for—

(3). The Preamble itself, notwithstanding its reference to those Creeds, states that the Declaratory Statement “ is not to be imposed as a disciplinary standard.”

8. The Rev. Alexander McCaig, B.A., LL.B., LL.D., Principal of Spurgeon's College, in a letter to me, expresses his views on the Declaratory Statement as follows :—

(1). As to the supreme authority of the Scriptures, the Declaratory Statement leaves much to be desired.

- (2). The Deity of Christ is not sufficiently emphasised.
- (3). The Atoning Work of Christ is certainly affirmed, but in a very vague and general way.
- (4). The Declaratory Statement is so ambiguous and vague that it would condone most serious unbelief.
- (5). As to the Arians, I suppose they would have agreed to most of it, with the exception of the first Article, which would have been acceptable to the Sabellians.
- (6). The seventh Article and the conclusion would cover the Universalists.

In view of the above considerations, it is earnestly to be hoped that the great Methodist Church, in harmony with its glorious evangelical history, will refuse to federate on the basis which is proposed—a basis that is as inconsistent with its own doctrinal Standards as it is dishonouring to the Bible and to the Divine Redeemer Whom its pages reveal.

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

No. XXIX.

THE UNITY OF SCRIPTURE: A WITNESS TO ITS INSPIRATION.

BY REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

By Inspiration we mean: "The specific agency of the Holy Spirit in the creation and construction of the Scripture." Besides the direct and emphatic claims to Inspiration made by the Scripture itself that claim is confirmed by many other arguments. One of the most remarkable and convincing of these is the wonderful Unity of Scripture. In order to estimate the significance of its unity it is necessary to grasp and bear in mind the fact that although it is bound up in one volume it is not really a Book, but a Library, consisting of 66 books; written by 40 or 50 authors, of all grades of culture, mental capacity and literary style, during a period extending over 1,500 years; from Moses, who lived centuries before the philosophers of Greece, down to St. John, in the first century of the Christian era. The books exhibit wide variety and diversity. Some are historical, others poetical; some contain laws, others lyrics; some are argumentative, others devotional. They are written in three different languages, in different lands, different ages and among different peoples. Their subject-matter comprehends almost every possible theme. They tell the story of creation and the structure of the heavens. They describe the processes of nature, and deal with everything of human interest. All this they do in the manifold styles of narrative, poetry and psalmody; abounding in oriental imagery, symbolism and imagination. Yet they combine to constitute one volume, throughout which there runs a unique unity and harmony which appears more clearly and distinctly the more closely and carefully its numberless minute agreements and coincidences are examined and scrutinised. Considering the conditions and circumstances under which these books were produced

the probabilities are vastly *against* any such unity as they actually present. This can only be accounted for by the admission of a supernatural element: that they all derived their instruction from the same source, and were all under the direction and illumination of the same Spirit. The Unity of Scripture is more fully realised if viewed from a few particular standpoints, such as the following:—

I.—UNITY OF DESIGN. One ruling design is everywhere manifest. It is a connected scheme from beginning to end. Starting with the Fall of Man and the ruin caused by the entrance of Sin, there is one purpose running all through, preparing the way and leading up to the coming Deliverer, the Redemption to be accomplished on earth, and the final consummation of His kingdom in glory. Its unity is the unity of a divine plan, and its harmony is the harmony of a controlling Intelligence. Each writer, while supplying his own contribution, saw only a small part of the whole design; but behind all was the Divine Architect, Who planned its structure, superintending His workmen, and guiding their work to one great end.

II.—UNITY IN HISTORY. The Scripture as a whole, from beginning to end, is a vast history: the history of religion, and of the relations between God and men; the history of redemption; the history of the kingdom of God in the world. It contains chronicles of the one kingdom in the three dispensations in which it has already been manifested, and predictions of its fourth and final manifestation yet to come. On one side its history, strictly speaking, is that of the chosen people alone, as the particular ordained race through which God would manifest Himself in His Incarnate Son; and although it touches on many other nations it is a history of them only in so far as, in some way, they stand connected with this. In these historical features and aspects of the Scripture there is among all its writers a consistent harmony.

III.—UNITY IN PROPHECY. One large section of Scripture consists of Prophecy and its Fulfilment. In all its prophecy there is one centre: the Kingdom and its King. Its great theme is the two comings of the Messianic King: the first in humiliation, the second in exaltation and glory. All prophecy moves around these two events. It is said that in the Old Testament there are 666 general prophecies, of which 333 refer to the coming of Messiah, and meet only in Christ. In this prophetic element of Scripture, amid much diversity, there is close and constant unity.

IV.—UNITY IN TEACHING. One special aspect of this argument is the unity of teaching which is maintained through a long and varied course of development. The leading doctrines of Christianity are to be traced through the many books of the Bible in a line of ever-widening and ever-deepening expansion. Each may be traced upwards to its germ in the earliest documents; and all combined converge through the older Scriptures to a consummate harmony in the New Testament. One example of this, among many others, is the doctrine of the Trinity which, with the redeeming relation to mankind of the Second Person in that Trinity, and the relation of the Third Person to the universe of life, runs through all the Scripture; but with a constantly progressive clearness. "There is not a single reference in the Old Testament to the Messiah, as a Person near to Jehovah or as Jehovah Himself, that is not perfectly consistent with

the amazing secret concerning His being and nature which the New Testament brings to light ; and among the multitudes of allusions to the Spirit of God there is not one that is not perfectly in harmony with what the later Scriptures declare as to His relation to the Father and the Son." In all its doctrinal and ethical teachings, while there is all the way through a progressive development there is no conflict or discord. Even in the few cases where, on the surface, there may seem to be an apparent opposition, as in the teachings of St. Paul and St. James on faith and works (Rom. 4¹⁻¹⁶ ; Gal. 2¹⁶⁻²¹, 3¹⁻¹⁴ ; James 2¹⁴⁻²⁶) a closer and more careful examination only reveals a deeper unity. In its constant allusions to matters touching upon physical science it everywhere follows one consistent method. On the one hand it gives no direct teaching on scientific truth ; but on the other no scientific fact is ever misrepresented, and no erroneous statement is found which subsequent discovery would have to correct. A kind of elastic set of terms is used containing scientific truth in germ. Such language is employed that, while not revealing scientific facts in advance, it correctly fits in with them when they are discovered. Terms were selected which held hidden truths until later ages should disclose their inner meaning. To the naked eye only about 1,000 stars were visible ; yet in *Psa.* 147⁴ and *Jer.* 32²² are statements in perfect harmony with the most far-reaching discoveries of modern astronomy. The language in *Eccles.* 12⁶ exactly suits the fact of the circulation of the blood which was not discovered until twenty-six centuries later. And similarly in other cases.

V.—ORGANIC UNITY. Organic Unity is the unity that belongs to an organised living structure, in which all the separate organs co-operate for its completeness and perfectness ; all the parts being necessary to complement one another, and all being pervaded by one principle of life. So do all the parts of Scripture work together for its completeness. Every book fills a place, and none can be lost or omitted without maiming the body of truth which the Scripture as a whole reveals. All the parts are necessary to perfect each other and the whole ; and all are pervaded by one life and spirit.

Such unparalleled unity and harmony as the Scripture displays, exhibited in these and many other forms, is a clear indication of a Divine Hand, and is justly claimed as a convincing witness to the presence and guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Who presided over the plan and structure and production of this Book of God.

This brief summary may fittingly close with the following convincing words of Dr. W. B. Pope :—

"The Unity of Scripture is a very strong credential in its favour as professing to be from God. It is one great vision, and its interpretation one : beginning and ending with the same Paradise, with thousands of years of redeeming history between. That the New Testament as fulfilment should so perfectly correspond with the Old Testament as prophecy is in itself the most wonderful phenomenon in literature : it is evidence as near demonstration as needs be of the intervention of a Divine Hand. The Redeemer made manifest in the later Scripture answers face to face, and feature for feature, to the Form predicted in the older Scripture. One idea runs through the whole : the kingdom of God set up or restored in His Incarnate Son. To this idea authors of various ages and of various races contribute in a harmony which never could be the result of accident or mere coincidence. Only the Divine power could have made so many men of different lands concert, yet without concerting, such a scheme of literature. If they had not asserted their inspiration of God, that hypothesis would have had to be invented to account for the facts and phenomena of their writings. But they have asserted it : the claim is bound up with every page of the word they have left behind them."

Acknowledgments.

The following sums, over and above the annual *Journal* Subscription, have been sent to us during the past two months :—

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Our thanks are presented to all our friends.

Will all Wesley Bible Union members who are attending the Representative Conference meet the President of the Union at 7.0 on Tuesday evening, July 16th, in the Y.M.C.A. Hall.

Members of the Union will greatly oblige the Secretary if they will reduce their correspondence with him to the lowest possible minimum during August and September.

The Journal of the Wesley Bible Union.

No. 8.

AUGUST, 1918.

Vol. V

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The Conference and Modernism.

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

The question of the Report of the Committee on Unity of Doctrine received very full consideration in the Pastoral Session of the Conference. The reception and adoption of the Report was moved by Rev. Dr. Workman and seconded by Rev. Dr. Maldwyn Hughes. The ideas set forth in this *Journal* were expressed in an amendment which was moved by Rev. Sherwin Smith, M.A., B.D. and seconded by Rev. Harold C. Morton, B.A. and Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett supported the Committee's Report, and the Rev. G. Armstrong Bennetts, B.A. the amendment. There was very plain statement of the differences between the Committee, and those who held the views expressed in the amendment. The supporters of the amendment shewed that in their view doctrines are existing amongst us that are destructive of the very foundations. The final issue was that the Conference decided not to come to a vote on the Report and the amendment; but to reappoint the Committee, to continue the

consideration of the subject during the year, and to report again to the next Conference. As the whole subject is *sub judice* it was resolved that no detailed report of the discussion should be published at present, and that only a summary of the proceedings should be given to the Press.

An appeal was made for the cessation of controversy, in reply to which Mr. Bennetts said it was impossible to abstain from opposing error, and from promulgating the truth which is an antidote to error. Mr. Morton insisted that this appeal really should be made to those who are responsible for the unrest in Methodism, and that the resolution ought to be that no erroneous teaching should be given in Methodism.

Our readers will doubtless be disappointed not to have a fuller report concerning a matter in which they are so deeply interested. We think it wise at present to refrain from expressing any opinion on the position in which matters are left by the Conference. Nothing has occurred to lessen our feeling of the seriousness of the doctrinal crisis in our Church. The facts still remain that the Conference decision relating to the Fernley Lecture of 1912 remains unrepealed, that equally mischievous Fernley Lectures have been published since, that literature abounding in Modernist error is constantly appearing under Wesleyan Methodist auspices, and that doctrines subversive of the Faith are being promulgated both by pen and voice by many people, in many places, in our literature, our pulpits and our schools. We hope that there are some indications that some who have thought that we have been making an unnecessary fuss are coming to recognize that the issues are grave, and that some little movement is taking place in the direction of looking thoughtfully and prayerfully at the facts. But the occurrences at Conference have been such as greatly to emphasize the necessity for extending and intensifying the work of the Wesley Bible Union. We must continue our work of defending the Bible from the assaults of its open foes and its betrayers within the churches. We shall do all in our power to maintain the Standards to which we are bound by our Model Deed and by the doctrinal pledges of our Ministers and Local Preachers; and to rescue the flock of God from poisonous and destructive heresies that undermine the very foundations of the Faith. Less than this we cannot do. Every Minister is bound by his ordination vows **“to be ready with all faithful**

diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contray to God's Word." Any Minister who fails for a single day to do his utmost to banish anti-Scriptural error violates his promise to give "ALL FAITHFUL DILIGENCE" to this work of rescuing the flock of God from soul-destroying error. The dissemination of doubts concerning Holy Scripture and the infallibility of the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is surely "erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word." Nothing can be allowed to gag us in respect of our protest against these errors, and in respect of our promulgation of the truths of the Gospel. All our readers are aware how terribly prevalent these errors are in all the Churches, and with all earnestness we appeal to our readers to do all in their power to combat them. We would repeat what we have often said that our friends would materially aid the cause if they would do the following things:—

(1). Join the Wesley Bible Union, if they have not already done so.

(2). Contribute as largely as they can to the Funds of the Union.

(3). Circulate the literature of the Union as they have opportunity.

(4). Do all they can to persuade their friends to join the Union.

(5). Organize local meetings of members of the Union.

(6). Send to the Secretary information concerning the dissemination of Modernist error.

(7). Pray constantly that God will "give a banner to them that fear Him that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Ps. 60⁴).

(8). Seek with all their might to bring the people to Christ by publishing the truths for which we are contending.

(9). Resolve to live as near to God as they can, exemplifying that "spiritual holiness" for the spread of which Wesleyan Methodism exists.

Besides the direct consideration of the Report of the Committee on Unity of Doctrine the subject came indirectly before the Conference in many ways, but particularly in the Report of the Committee of Spiritual Advance, and of the Cliffe College Conference. The Report of the Spiritual

Advance Committee says the following things, for example :—

Viewing the Connexion as a whole, it seems as though after our early raptures, our glorious triumphs, our manifold temptations, our years of enlightenment and vision, we are now traversing the dreary plain of the Enchanted Ground, and are in no little danger of yielding to the drowsiness which is the peculiar peril of its mist-laden air.

From many sides we hear that the services are lacking in freshness and reality; that the Message is losing its distinctiveness, its passion, and conviction. Attendance at the House of God wanes. Much reluctance is shewn to accept any office which demands regular and frequent attendance at duty. From year to year the difficulty increases to obtain suitable Class Leaders, Local Preachers, and Sunday School Teachers, and to maintain our characteristic means of grace. The painful decrease in the number of Church members and of Sunday scholars is assuming ominous proportions. Aggressive Evangelism is dormant.

We are aware that similar criticisms have been made in former times, and that other Churches are to-day suffering in like manner. But such considerations bring little consolation. Whatever was true of other days, we are driven to the unwelcome conclusion on this occasion by inextinguishable fact.

* * * *

Hearers affirm that, while sermons have gained in culture and thoughtfulness, they have lost in directness, conviction, and appeal. In the striking phrase of one witness, "the bell does not ring."

* * * *

Throughout the land Evangelistic fervour burns low. Here and there the flame bursts out, and as in former days sets hearts on fire with the love of Christ and zeal for the Kingdom. But it is fitful, and "hardly flares ere it begins to falter."

The Report of the Cliffe Conference contains the following :

A sense of something like defeat and impotence in face of the present world-conditions weighs upon our ministry. The failure is not due mainly, as we judge, to intellectual causes, to scientific agnosticism, or to the historical criticism of the Bible; nor to social unrest, and prejudice against the Church, as identified with the interests of property, which is rife amongst large sections of the working people. Neglect of public worship and contempt for the Churches are almost as conspicuous in the suburbs as in the artisan city quarters; they have extended from the town to the country districts. The attendance of "outsiders" at our churches has fallen to a low ebb almost everywhere. The widespread aversion manifest in the cultured and uncultured strata of society alike is not so much a positive hostility as a blank indifference. Organized religion as a matter of personal obligation or interest, has dropped out of the thoughts of multitudes of men; the things for which Christ and the Gospels stand would seem to have no existence for them, and to lie in another world from theirs. A similar apathy, not to say antipathy, prevails, amongst the men-folk at least, on the Continent of Europe; never in any previous age did so large a

proportion of civilized mankind attempt to live in habitual disregard of God. "Our Gospel," for the time, appears to be "hid," so far as concerns the masses of those to whom we are sent to preach it.

The depression of spirit felt in the Methodist ministry on the above accounts has its counterpart and aggravation in the listlessness largely pervading in the Churches. We meet in various directions with a dullness of experience and a slackness in service which are deeply discouraging. Our social means of grace have fallen into comparative neglect and discredit. Our people are conscientious and loyal; they are peaceable, kindly, generous, and walk worthily of the Lord in many respects, but the glow and enthusiasm of men "filled with the Spirit" are sadly rare. The passion for holiness, the readiness to testify for Christ, the delight in prayer, the zest of religion, and "joy in the Holy Ghost" which characterized Methodism once are no longer conspicuous amongst us. These symptoms of a lower vitality trouble us more than the shrinkage in numbers in Church and Sunday School which has been continuous for ten years past.

Painful as they are, these admissions are an improvement upon the counsels which have been very prevalent during recent decades, viz., "Talk up your successes. Be silent about your failures. Be optimistic! Be optimistic!" The ostrich-policy of the head buried in the sand is the extreme of folly. The recognition of the evils is the first step towards their cure. We note that the Conference at Cliffe admits that the things which '*characterized Methodism once are no longer conspicuous amongst us.*' But they do not call us back to the methods of the former time, but the drift of their Report is to call us to a wider departure from the tone of the Methodism to which they seem to look back with longing.

They tell us that they do not think the decay which they describe is due to the historical criticism of the Bible. We think they are greatly mistaken in this judgment. What is the general trend of the Historical Criticism of the Bible? It affirms that much of the Old Testament is only folk-lore and legend; that we have there no accurate record of the origin of man or of the origin of sin; that we have no accurate history of the Hebrew nation; that much of the Old Testament was fabricated in order to palm off upon the Jewish people, under the pretence that it was given by God through Moses, a sacerdotal and ceremonial system that was a pure fabrication of the priestly caste; that it is not at all certain that Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, or any of the patriarchs ever existed; that much of the Old Testament is to be classed with heathen mythology; that false miracles are narrated in that book for the evil purpose of clothing great names with

a halo of glory ; that the Incarnate God has led the ages into error by declaring that every jot and tittle of the Old Testament is precious, and by saying, in special reference to a very difficult passage, **THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN.** (John 10³⁵).

The Historical Criticism does equally deadly work in relation to the New Testament. It represents Paul as having distorted the teachings of Christ into a system of doctrine quite different from that set forth in the words of the Master Himself. It accuses Paul of misquoting the Old Testament, and charges him with sometimes using passages of the Old Testament in meanings quite antagonistic to their proper sense in their original context. It repudiates Paul's doctrine of original sin as based on the Genesis account of the Fall. But it is not content with this. It discredits the historicity of the greatest of the Four Gospels, the Gospel according to John. It affirms that the reports of some of the words of Christ in the Gospels are not what Christ said, but are misapprehensions of what our Lord really said, the reporters giving us their mistaken ideas of what Jesus meant. But the ruthless hand of sacrilegious destruction goes beyond this. There are those who deny the Virgin Birth, thus attributing gross error to the accounts of the Nativity given by Matthew and Luke. It denies the pre-existence of Jesus. It repudiates the bodily resurrection of Christ. But this is not enough. It represents our Lord as being mistaken in the earlier part of His ministry, asserting that He expected to come to an earthly Kingship during His manifestation in the flesh ; and that one of His trials was the fading of this conception that He had formed of His Messiahship. It represents Him as changing from this to another erroneous view of His Kingdom which it says He held to the last, and communicated to His Apostles, viz., that His Second Coming would occur very soon after His resurrection, so that He would really return for a temporal kingdom on earth in the life-time of some of those who were present when He spoke to them. It further affirms that in many things He spoke from the standpoint of the errors of His age and nation ; that He saw things through the medium of "the fantastic notions of an unscientific age" ; that He imagined that He was casting out demons, whereas the truth was that He was only healing cases of acute nervous disorder ; and much more of the same

kind. In its extreme forms the Historical Criticism casts doubt upon the question whether such a person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed. This is definitely done in books that distinctly contend that the story of Jesus is a legendary romance that gradually grew up in the imagination of a Jewish sect to which the name of their legendary hero was attached. I know of one definite case of a minister of one of the nominally evangelical churches in this country, in whose congregation was a highly cultured college professor, a devout Christian, who was so distressed by the Christless character of this minister's preaching that he one day spoke to him on the subject. The reply he received was this: **"SIR, CAN YOU PROVE TO ME THAT SUCH A PERSON AS JESUS OF NAZARETH EVER EXISTED?"**

In my last interview with my dear friend and former colleague, John H. Sholl, he said to me: "Bennetts, do you see as many conversions as you used to do?" My reply was: "No, not a tenth of the number. Do you?" "Oh no," he said, "I should say as you do. Conversions now are with me comparatively few." I said: "What do you think is the reason of this?" He replied: "When you and I began our ministry, people listened to us as coming to them with a message from God. Now they listen to us as enunciating our own opinions on religion. The preachers of Doubt are countervailing the messages of those who preach the Gospel."

Notwithstanding the opinion of the Cliffe Conference, I feel sure that two things conjoined are the pestilence which is blighting the work of the church of the present, viz., the lax living of worldly church members, concerning whom the Holy Spirit speaking by James says: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4th): and the Biblical criticism which disseminates doubt concerning the Bible and robs our Lord and Master of His authority,

The Eclipse of Nonconformity.

REV. HAROLD C. MORTON, B.A.

The city of Exeter was the first locality in which the forces of disintegration came to a head. Dr. Stoughton, in

his volumes entitled "Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges," gives a vivid picture of the series of events which originated there—though one cannot forbear to note that he nowhere in these volumes shows any sufficient sense of the vital importance of the events which he chronicles, or of the fatal influence of the laxity he records. Two very able men, William Whiston and Samuel Clarke, had been expelled by the Established Church mainly for holding Unitarian opinions; and these two men had much influence upon the Dissenters of Exeter, who caught the spirit of "free enquiry" and proceeded to greater lengths than had hitherto been reached. It is notable that the Episcopalians were more faithful than the Nonconformists in that day, and expelled men who had ceased to hold the true faith; just as in our own day the Rev. R. J. Campbell was an honoured minister in Nonconformity in spite of his "new theology," whereas he had to make a public retraction before he was admitted into the ministry of the Episcopal Church. At Exeter a Synod had been established for consideration of matters of doctrine; and on one occasion, while waiting for the usual lecture to be given, it was proposed that those present should declare each in his own words what he believed respecting the doctrine of the Trinity. Opinions then emerged tinged in varying but as many thought in serious degrees with Unitarian heresy. A great contention for the faith arose in Exeter and presently spread to London.

In London at that time, around the year 1719, one of the most prominent figures was the Independent Minister of the Fetter Lane Church, Thomas Bradbury. "Bold Bradbury" Queen Anne called him; and one needs only to look upon his Cromwellian countenance to realise that he was one of God's soldier saints. He was foremost in the fight for religious liberty in those hard and troubled days, was once burnt in effigy by the Episcopalian mob, and almost expected to be burnt in person; and when the vital doctrines of the Church of God were imperilled, he was foremost in their defence. In 1719 a Conference of ministers was summoned at the little chapel called Salter's Hall. A long and heated debate took place, in which it became evident that almost half of those present were more or less of the Unitarian way of thinking, and Bradbury in that desperate position tried hard to bind together the true believers and prevent the entire

destruction of Nonconformity. He proposed that then and there those present should publicly subscribe a document affirming their adhesion to the orthodox Trinitarian faith. A small majority carried his proposition, and he was among the first to go forward to sign the roll. Some of those present raised a hiss when they saw him, and Bradbury cried out :— "It is the serpent's voice, and it may be expected against a zeal for Him who is the women's seed!" Almost all the Independents signed the roll; almost all the Presbyterians refused to sign; and the Baptists were divided, though it seems that most of them signed. After the Salter's Hall meetings terminated the controversy continued long and fiercely in speech and pamphlet, and it is not to be wondered at that there were many charges of dishonesty and falsehood, since those who had drifted or were drifting to Unitarianism were men pledged to the orthodox position by the doctrinal tradition and Standards of their Churches. But no one can estimate the good which was done by Bradbury and his helpers. They probably saved Nonconformity from becoming Unitarian in its entirety. "I am glad to see," wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter to Bradbury, "that amidst our other much lesser differences, we all stand fast and agree in contending for the faith as it was once delivered to the saints." The *future* that was in store for Independency, and for that English Presbyterianism, was God's plain seal of approval upon the resolute fight made for truth.

Before summarising that future in the plain words of historians, it will be of interest and moment to see how Dr. Stoughton describes the religious life, and especially the doctrinal position and the preaching of that and the following periods. By about the year 1730 there had arisen much misgiving amongst Nonconformists as to the condition of their Churches. They were declining both in numbers and in spiritual power. One observer in London names among several reasons for this decline the Socinian doctrine which had invaded so many Churches; he also notes that Arminianism had gained ground, apparently God's preparation for Methodism; and another remark is very significant, viz., that whilst there were only 70 Independent and Presbyterian Ministers in London in 1731, since 1718 there had been no fewer than 20 Nonconformist Ministers who had seceded to

the Established Church. He evidently regarded the Independents as the most vigorous part of London Nonconformity; and a census of Nonconformity throughout England, taken in 1715, which showed 1107 congregations in all, revealed the fact that while Presbyterians were in a large majority, yet the Independents had increased. The Baptists were the least numerous of the three divisions; and the General Baptists, unlike their brethren the Particular Baptists, "were caught in the current of free enquiry, and proceeded, especially in the West of England, from Trinitarianism to Arianism and from Arianism to Socinianism." The spread of doctrinal error is sufficient to account for the lack of the old-time fire which was one of the most marked failings of the Nonconformity of the period; for nothing is more certain than that the chill of death settles quickly upon Churches which have begun to lose their faith. Uncertainty and fire cannot go together; and even those who have so far maintained their position, and in words would seem to hold the truth as certainly as ever, find it difficult to escape the chill breath of doubt which is wafted from their one-time fellows in the evangelic faith.

The spread of error, and the consequent lack of the fire of conviction is one of the respects in which the Nonconformity of the 18th century resembled, in its causes of decay, the Nonconformity of to-day; and there are other respects noted by the historian which we should do well to lay to heart.

Foremost among them I should place *the revolt from the supernatural*. That is probably one of the root causes of the widespread rejection of Biblical Faith to-day. Speaking of Nonconformist preaching, Dr. Stoughton says:—"A distinction must be made between its substance and its form. As to its substance, it has been said, that a great change began to take place in it, inasmuch as preachers came more and more to see that Christianity rests on moral rather than upon supernatural grounds, and that this committed them to new paths of thought, which led eventually to latitudinarian views. Where this habit existed by itself, it tended in the long run to a great theological revolution—in short, to produce results distressing to those who walked in the old orthodox ways." (Vol. i., p. 194). This is manifestly a very insufficient putting of the case. To base Christianity on moral instead of

supernatural grounds is not the *preparation* for a theological revolution so much as a theological revolution itself. Christianity is supernatural from its earliest beginning to its final consummation, and a merely moral Christianity is not Christianity at all. But there were two things which, at all events to outward seeming, partially counteracted the ruinous results which were bound to accrue. One was that preachers who had ceased to believe the old statements in the old sense, yet continued to use the same *language* which their orthodox fathers had used, so that many people would not be aware of the real meaning of what they were saying—a feature of that day for which there are many parallels in our own time. The second thing was that while rejecting the supernatural, many still asserted the authority of the Bible. “Some who did place Christianity on a moral foundation rather than any other, also held so firmly to the authority of Scripture, and continued to interpret it so much in the old Puritan spirit, that they really diverged very little from what is understood as Evangelical teaching. One principle in their minds so modified the operation of another that what some would deem the necessary logical results did not follow in actual life.” Of course, there were many also who held to the truth in reality as well as in form, and “the theology of Bradbury—and he represents a large class—was all but identical with that of Owen and Goodwin.” But surely no reasonable mind can doubt that it was these last who saved the remnants of Nonconformity, and not any empty words or vain pretence of respect for the authority of Scripture on the part of the “new theologians” of the day.

The second further respect in which our own day resembles the old days of Nonconformity's decay is that many were obsessed by the *idea of comprehension*. “Free Enquiry” was an ideal which necessarily involved the further practical ideal of including within one Church men of the most diverse opinions. They objected necessarily to the subscription to creeds and formularies. The head of one theological academy, John Horsey, of Northampton, seems to have succeeded, amid the theological controversies of the time, in keeping his theological views a secret from the students of his academy, and surprised his friends by affirming, on his deathbed, views that made it clear that he died an orthodox evangelical believer! Many professed not to be

concerned with the opinions of men but only with the men themselves! "Their reverence," says Dr. Stoughton, "was restricted to the character, spirit, and temper of the Reformers and Puritans; it extended not to their opinions. They paid no attention to Westminster Confessions and Catechisms, to Declarations of Faith, and Articles of Agreement; but they had a profound respect for the Westminster Assembly, and for Puritan Confessors under the Stuart dynasty. They valued them more for what they had thrown off than for what they had preserved. With a strong one-sided tendency they exalted the memory of their fathers as the pioneers of free enquiry. Could those fathers have risen from the grave they would scarcely have accepted the kind of admiration sometimes bestowed upon them by their sons." It was a comprehension surely gone mad which appointed to the theological Seminary at Hoxton in 1763 tutors of different theological opinions, and by that time Independency was so far involved that they united in its support and administration. The kind of results that were to be expected seem sometimes at least to have naturally followed. The Warrington Presbyterian Theological Academy was an instance in point. It was started to provide trained men for the ministry; but after existing about a quarter of a century, and training about 400 students, it was found that while it had trained some eminent doctors and lawyers there were only about six out of the four hundred who "rendered any service to the Presbyterian interest of the country." Of course "comprehension" involves not only the toleration of error but even the toleration of orthodoxy as well. Thus "orthodoxy of the old-fashioned type did not wholly disappear"; but "Dr. Langford is said to have been, in the latter part of his life, the only Presbyterian minister in London who retained the faith of the earlier Nonconformists." It is very significant, however, of the impossibility of an orthodox ministry in the midst of ministries whose ideals are free enquiry and comprehension, that Dr. Langford finally became minister of the Independent Church meeting in the King's Weigh House.

The third further respect in which our own day resembles the old days of Nonconformity's decay is really perhaps to be put down as a corollary of the ideal of "comprehension." That ideal necessarily resulted in *the policy of drift*. Nobody seems to have cared. No one apparently made any great

effort to stem the tide of free enquiry within Presbyterianism. No one emulated the fine stand made by Bradbury and others within Independency. The result was that while Independency lived, and after the Methodist Revival received a new birth from above, Presbyterianism drifted to the abyss of utter ruin.

Of course the Presbyterian Churches fell out one by one, and did not disappear in a moment. It seems that the Presbyterians of the West of England went first, then London, Cheshire, and Lancashire—"a land of Goshen for the Presbyterians," as some one called it—followed suit. "There was no longer," says Sylvester Horne, "sufficient force of faith behind the Trinitarian Standards to keep them alive. One after another, the Presbyterian Churches in the West of England went over to the Unitarians, carrying their chapel properties with them. In London, in Cheshire, and in Lancashire a similar phenomenon was witnessed. As has been said, the Presbyterian denomination 'vanished as suddenly as it had arisen.' The Church of the Assembly's catechism and confession became in too many cases the Church of a vague humanitarianism, a Church whose members had eliminated from their beliefs every characteristic Christian doctrine except the unity of God and the Humanity of Jesus." ("History of the Free Churches," p. 256.)

Yet it seems indubitable that for long Presbyterianism lingered on in some parts of the country. For its literary and social rather than for its religious graces, it held an eminent place in the Eastern Counties in the second half of the 18th century. But a new error was arising in those latter days which would seem to have given the final blow to Presbyterian Nonconformity. "Free enquiry" had often pretended to give the place of authority to the Bible in the realm of religion. That it was for the most part a pretence and little more is perfectly clear. To see that we need only to remember what "free enquiry" means, and to add the remembrance that Christianity was based by its advocates on moral bases rather than supernatural: and yet at the same time it may well be that some sort of check was imposed by the claim that the Scriptures were authoritative. But at the later date a further likeness to the times in which we ourselves are living appeared in the denial of *the authority of Scripture*. "Breaking loose from what is termed the

authority of Scripture, and relying upon the spiritual faculties of the soul, they sought for truth in that direction, without denying the aid to be derived from prophets and apostles, especially the Lord Jesus Christ. Not rejecting miracles, they gave them a place in the system of evidence, but different from that assigned by Price and Priestley ; whilst far from denying Inspiration, they nevertheless weakened the distinctive force of it in Scripture, by relegating it to an operation so wide and vast as to comprise all genius, all mental and spiritual power whatever, whether possessed by poet or by sage, by artist or by legislator." All this we are fatally familiar with in the present day. That Inspiration is the same in all manner of realms, and as active to-day as it was in the days of the writing of the Scriptures, is one of the contentions of Dr. Horton's book, "*Verbum Dei*" ; and it was in connection with this claim that Dr. Parker made his famous reply : " Dr. Horton tells us that he is himself as certainly inspired as Isaiah. We are glad to hear it. Let him give us a specimen ! " That " aid is to be derived from prophets and apostles, especially from the Lord Jesus Christ," is the admission of most Modernists, while at the same time they affirm that they do not accept anything as the word of God merely because it is written by an apostle in the Scriptures or spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. All these persons may help us ; but our own minds are supreme for us after all. If there is a difference between our day and that other it would seem at first sight to be this—that the Presbyterians *ended* by denying the authority of Scripture, whilst we have *begun* our modern decay by that denial. But the difference is probably more in seeming than in reality. For " free enquiry " led its votaries to all manner of positions which were out of harmony with the teachings of Scripture, and which none the less were adhered to in spite of the fact. It seems clear that all along the authority of Scripture was flouted ; and then as the end drew near what had all along been flouted was at length definitely denied.

Thus it was that Nonconformity ruined its magnificent chances. The heroic new beginning of 1662, and the prospect that after a time of purification in the wilderness a really Biblical Nonconformity would again become the controlling influence in the life of the nation, were both nullified by movements of error in almost every way akin to the move-

ments which are wrecking Nonconformity to-day. The greatest days of England so far have been the days when Nonconformity of the true Biblical sort was supreme under Cromwell. But in that day only the minority of the nation was Nonconformist, whereas the prospect was opened up in 1662 that the majority of the people might be won for primitive Bible Christianity. But heresies of many kinds supervened. First in the West, in London, and in Lancashire; then in those parts where Presbyterianism survived later, such as Yorkshire and the Eastern Counties, the blight simply killed the tree. In the middle of the 18th century Yorkshire Nonconformity had sunk to such a level that "congregations in the large towns were almost wholly heterodox and apathetic," says Dr. Stoughton; and goes on to add a sentence in itself revealing the desperateness of the position, viz., "with the exception of one assembling in the Nether Chapel, Sheffield"—an admirable illustration of the exception which proves the rule!

"In winding up what has been said respecting English Presbyterianism, it is sufficient to add that with all the ability of its ministers, all the respectability of its congregations, all the culture of its society, and all the services it rendered to science, literature, and liberty, it did not advance in numbers or in power. So far from it, its history for fifty years (the historian might have said twice fifty) was one of decline. The causes are obvious. A dry hard cold method of preaching generally marked the pulpit; warm vigourous spiritual life appeared not in the pews." (Stoughton, vol. ii., p. 229.) Skeat, in his "History of the Free Churches," thus sums up the matter:—Referring to the Exeter case, the case of the Rev. James Pierce, in connection with whom the "free enquiry" movement first came to a head, he declares that the tyrannous conduct of the trustees of Mr. Pierce's Church "contrived to make the doctrine of Unitarianism popular, and they lived to see nearly every Nonconformist Church in Exeter, and some of the principal Churches in Devonshire and Somersetshire, lapse from the orthodox standard. The Presbyterian Churches of London, Lancashire, and Cheshire became similarly infected. In less than half a century the doctrines of the great founders of Presbyterianism could scarcely be heard from any Presbyterian pulpit in England. The denomination vanished as suddenly as it had arisen, and,

excepting in literature, has left little visible trace of the greatness of its power." ("History of the Free Churches," p. 311).

Presbyterianism was too far gone to be saved by the Methodist Revival. "Its doom was writ." But other Nonconformity was rejuvenated by that mighty movement of the Spirit of God. Based upon Scripture and upon Scripture only, giving to it the place of supreme honour which was involved by, if not fully and definitely stated by, the Protestant witness concerning truth, and kindled as all men are kindled who come into loving personal submissive touch with the Scriptures, the early Methodists brought back to a waning Nonconformity those fundamental convictions concerning the Scriptures which made Nonconformity in the beginning, and were essential for the continuance of her witness to the land. The greatest factor in the growth of Nonconformity during the 19th century was the influence of the Methodist Revival, which strove so mightily to base Christian Faith once more solely and simply on the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures.

And now to-day, what unspeakable tragedy if Nonconformity be eaten up by those very errors which destroyed the greater part of Nonconformity in days gone by! Lip-service to the Authority of Scripture whilst the principles and conclusions of German rationalistic criticism are accepted far and wide! A great willingness to dispense with the supernatural wherever feasible! A desire to replace the old-time united and fervent witness to Bible Truth by a scheme of "comprehension," which to-day as ever simply means chaos and unfaithfulness! A carelessness on the part of the rank and file, which just reflects the lethargy of those who are supposed to be the leaders—"leaders" who are not ready to face conflict and obloquy even in the cause of eternal truth! The peril is that chilled by doubts, inactive because half dead, with blindness settling on the eyes of her heart, Nonconformity may drift down the current of the times to the Disaster which waits for her in the distance. God has no use for Churches which prefers "free enquiry" to the authority of His Holy Word, and lose sight, amid the mists of their own speculations, of the burning realities revealed by Him to men. To us with our few years these processes of decay seem long and tardy; but

Though the mills of God grind slowly
 Yet they grind exceeding small :
 Though with patience He stands waiting,
 With exactness grinds He all.

The Book of Genesis and Modern Science.

GIANTS AND ANTEDILUVIAN CIVILISATIONS.

REV. D. GATH WHITLEY.

We now come to the account of the Antediluvian Giants, which is given in Genesis vi. 4, and who were the children of the "Sons of God" and the "daughters of Men"? By "Giants" in this passage is undoubtedly meant men of great stature, for the same Hebrew word (*Nephilim*) is used also in Numbers xiii. 32, 33, where it refers to the Anakim of Palestine, who were real Giants in stature.

Here the Higher Critics declare that Giants never existed, and that the Bible is untrue. "It is contrary to Science"; they say—"it is scientifically impossible. There is no evidence in its favour, and so the Bible account cannot be believed."

We shall now examine what Science *really* has to say on this matter.

First of all, it is a fact that Giants have existed in recent times whose height has been measured, and that they have been natives of different countries. Thus, Chang the Chinese Giant was 8 feet 2 inches high. Cotter, an Irishman, who died in 1802, was 8 feet 7 inches high. Murphy, another Irishman, and the tallest man whose height was ever measured, was 8 feet 10 inches high. Readers of this magazine have perhaps seen in Madame Tussaud's wax-works in London, a model of Louskin the Russian Giant, who was a soldier in the Imperial Guard, and was 8 feet 5 inches high. I could give the names of others (and dates) who have lived during the last three centuries, and who have been more than 8 feet high. There is now in the Museum of Trinity College, Dublin, the skeleton of a man which is 8 feet 6 inches in height; and the skeleton of Charles Byrne is now in the

Museum of the College of Surgeons, and is 8 feet 4 inches in height. In reply to these well known facts the Higher Critics say: "We don't dispute that many men of a great height are found now and then living, but what we *do* deny is that a *race* of Giants lived on the earth long ago."

In answer to this we reply that these Giants to which we have referred lived in many *different countries* and belonged to *different races*, so that the Giants who were their ancestors lived long ago all over the world. Moreover, when we find a few gigantic animals here and there amidst smaller ones we generally discover that these rare giant animals are the last specimens of a race which formerly existed in great numbers but which is now dying out. Thus, at the present time, the great Wild Bison or Aurochs lives in only *one spot* in Europe, and this is one particular forest in Poland. But formerly the Aurochs was spread all over Europe, and formed a race of numerous great Bisons. Now, however, they have nearly all died out, and are represented only by a few scattered individuals, who live only in the darkest depths of one great forest in Poland. These animals will soon be entirely extinct. Let us take another case. More than a 1000 years ago a gigantic deer lived in Ireland called the Irish Elk, which was much larger than any deer or elk now living. These giants of the deer race were only found here and there in Ireland, and soon after they died out entirely. But long ages before this the Irish Elks formed a *race* of animals which existed in every country in northern Europe. These facts then prove (and many more of a similar character could be produced) that the Giants of the human race who are *occasionally* found now in different countries, are the representatives of *races* of Giants which were spread over the earth long ages ago. Besides this, we must remember, that in *every country* where the very tall men and women have lived, there are old stories and traditions which say that long ages ago *great numbers* of Giants lived in the same countries, so that it is plain that the Giants which now appear in so many counties are really the last representatives of *races* of giants which lived long ago in the same regions.

Next, let us remember that a *race* of Giants is now living in one part of the world. I allude to the Patagonians, who live in the southern part of South America. Their average height is at least 6 feet, but there are many who are

much taller, and they are sometimes more than 7 feet in height. As the average height of men now living is only 5 feet 4 inches, it is plain that the Patagonians are real Giants. It is clear also that when the Patagonians were first discovered by the Europeans—about 400 years ago—they were still taller. Contact with Europeans generally degrades savages, as they practice European vices and give way to strong drink which Europeans introduce. This makes the savage races puny and sickly, and they become shorter in stature and more stunted. As all the Europeans who *first visited* the Patagonians describe them as being very gigantic in stature, we may well believe that these savages have for a long time been decreasing in height.

Now let us turn to Palestine in ancient days. We know that when the spies of the Israelites entered Palestine they found Giants (or "sons of Anak") living in the country (Numbers xiii. 3). We are also told that these Giants had long before formed separate nations which lived in special parts of Palestine and were called by special names. The names were Anakim or, in the Hebrew, *Rephaim*. Thus the Giants who lived in Moab before the Israelitish conquest were called Emims, and those who lived in the land of the Ammonites were called Zamzummims or Zuzims (see Deuteronomy, chap. ii. ver. 10, 11, 20, 21). These Giants were driven out by the Canaanites. Og the King of Bashan had formerly ruled over Giants in Bashan, and the capital of his kingdom was called Ashteroth Karnaim. He was killed by the Israelites, and his iron bedstead was preserved in Rabbath (Deuteronomy, chap. iii. ver. 2). In the days of Abraham these nations of Giants were settled in Palestine. When Chedorlaomer King of Elam invaded Palestine he conquered the Rephaim in Bashan, the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim (Genesis xv. 5). All these were races of Giants. The ancient Egyptian records also speak of a "city of the Giants" in Palestine, and the name *Rephaim* (or Giants) is even now preserved in some ruined towns in Palestine. Goliath of Gath, killed by David, was a Giant, and several other Giants were killed by David's chosen warriors (see 1 Samuel, xxi. 15-22). These Giants were living in the land of the Philistines, but they had dwelt before this near Jerusalem, as a valley near Jerusalem was called "The valley of the Rephaim," that is, "The valley of the Giants" (2 Sam.

v. 22). Let the reader examine these passages, and compare them with some good account of the geography of ancient Palestine, such as Professor Sayce gives in his valuable work entitled, *Patriarchal Palestine*. All over Palestine in the present day there are stories and legends of these ancient Giants related by the inhabitants.

Giants also lived in North America in prehistoric days. Some time ago some very ancient graves were discovered in the States of Tennessee and Michigan which contained skeletons—one of these was more than 7 feet high, and another exceeded 6 feet. In 1871 another remarkable grave was discovered in the State of Iowa. This was deep underground, and contained a vault filled with skeletons of great size, the largest being 7 feet 8 inches high. These remains belonged to an *entirely unknown* race. It is certain therefore that a race of Giants lived in North America in prehistoric days.

All over Europe there are legends of the Giants, and even in Siberia traditions of a somewhat similar character exist.

We find also the skeletons of men who actually lived *before the Flood*, some of which are very tall. In Southern France the men who lived before the flood with the lion, elephant, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus, and whose skeletons have been found in the caverns of the Dordogne, and in Mentone (in the French Riviera) ranged from 6 feet to 6 feet 4 inches in height. This race of ancient French Giants is called the Cro-Magnon Race, and many skeletons belonging to it have been found and measured.

In ancient times all the civilised races had legends of Giants which existed in prehistoric days. The Greeks, the Scandinavians, the Arabians, the Armenians, and the Babylonians, as well as the ancient Hindoos, all believed that long ages ago immense Giants lived upon the earth, who were horrible and wicked. Indirect support to this belief is also furnished by Geology, which shows us that the oldest members of some races of plants and animals were immensely larger than are the modern representatives of these races. Thus the gigantic trees which formed our coal beds have only puny and dwarfish representatives living in the present day; and the present fishes of the ganoid class were in olden time represented by gigantic species far larger than any of the class living now. The earliest representatives of many classes

of plants and animals were giants, while other representatives now living are dwarfs. Professor Haughton (a talented Irish geologist) says of this geological fact : " In each of the subkingdoms of Nature, the earlier forms of life, though generally inferior in organization to the later forms, surpassed them in physical bulk." (*Manual of Geology*, p. 242.)

Probably the Higher Critics are ignorant of these facts of Science.

Correspondence Column.

I have received a very great many very encouraging messages from our members, particularly when they are sending in their annual subscriptions (as I greatly wish some hundreds more would do in October next!) Just three or four of such messages I should like to reproduce here.

The REV. ALFRED HARDY writes :—" I believe the Union is doing much needed work, and the blessing of God is upon it. I give my old copies of the Magazine to our preachers and others, wherever I think they will do most good. It is a pleasure to me to call our people's attention to the contents of the Magazine in the pulpit. The Modernist poison is killing our progress in many places, but our excellent *Journal* is doing much to kill it? More strength to our elbow!"

The REV. SAMUEL T. BOYD, B.A., of Dublin, writes :—" I congratulate you on your success, and feel thankful that you are able to defend with such ability the old truths, and at the same time it is saddening to think that such an effort is necessary within the bounds of our Church, whose glory was for so long the uniformity of her pulpit teaching. Wishing the Bible Union still greater success."

MR. R. M. PRITCHARD, of Newcastle, sends some very encouraging words :—" May I express my profound gratitude to you and your brave colleagues for your noble and priceless service to Methodism. Feel assured that we laymen fully realize how painful this work is to you. You are truly taking up your cross and have much obliquy and brow-beating to endure. But be of good courage; you are in a noble succession. We will not forget you in our prayers."

MR. F. A. ASHBY writes from West Croydon :—" It is with great eagerness and profit that I read such a grand *Journal* as this."

MR. R. H. FURBY calls attention to what very few seem to realize, viz., that some of our most earnest but too pacific members of Society are simply leaving us, with no words uttered, in a kind of despair of Methodism. He says :—" I always look forward to receiving the *Journal*, though much of the reading is very painful, especially as I know it is all too true. I have read your article on the 'Alternatives for Methodism.' Yes: that is just the position. Very few seem to trouble. I have pointed this out for some time. Some of our earnest souls make no complaint; they simply drop out

of Church life and look for a purer atmosphere. They will not be mixed up with any controversy. If they cannot be fed with spiritual nourishment from our pulpits but only get poison gas, without anything being said they remove quietly somewhere else. All this is patent to our Ministry, who know and are well aware of what is taking place. All I can make of it now is that they are out to wreck the whole Connexion, and destroy the glorious work that has been done, and for the doing of which we were raised up."

Mr. Furby goes on to tell me of the Spiritualistic practices of one of our ministers, who is thus causing great unrest in his Church and doing much harm to the cause of God. I have had also a second letter from another correspondent upon this last named matter.

MR. CHAS. H. DYKE, F.R.H.S., of Thornton Heath, referring to the *Journal*, says:—"The need of such a publication is more than ever imperative. More and more seem to be abroad, sowing tares among the wheat. Have you noticed that Dr. Glazebrook, Canon of Ely Cathedral, in his recent book, 'The Faith of a Modern Churchman,' states that the words, 'Born of the Virgin Mary,' and 'the third day rose again from the dead,' may be taken as symbolical, not historical. I am afraid that such teaching is not only undermining faith but weakening morals."

The REV. GEORGE PENMAN, in the course of a letter, says:—"Doubtless you know that the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South are seeking re-union. I have had a copy of the suggested constitution of the United Church. It refuses power to change the doctrinal Standards.

You know that the United Methodist Church here in the homeland has power to change (the Standards of Doctrine). Some of our Progressives will favour Methodist Re-Union, hoping to squeeze into the Act of Parliament permission to alter."

I hope that some members of the Wesley Bible Union who are anxious to bring such re-union about will carefully note this danger, and realize that the forces making for re-union are probably not all such as a true Methodist can sanction. In my judgment there is no justification for uniting into a larger whole those divergent companies of Christians who make up the various Methodist Churches of to-day. Each of these Churches is rapidly falling asunder into widely divergent parts. Re-union to-day simply means the piling up of differences. But if any one of the existing Methodist Churches would return with its whole heart to the original Methodist Faith it would become *the* Methodist Church of the future.

REV. J. FINDLATER, to whose books, "The Eternal Springs of Revival," and "Perfect Love," we have often referred in these columns, writes, taking exception to the statement respecting Richard Baxter in my article on "The Eclipse of Nonconformity." He says regarding the statement that Richard Baxter first marked out the way of "free enquiry," "I am afraid it will not bear examination, whatever Sylvester Horne may say." Mr. Findlater quotes from Baxter's Works the following passage as revealing his strong denial that "virtuous and honest unbelievers" may be saved by Christ's redemption.

"Objection 8. 'But it is incredible that all those shall be damned that live honestly and soberly, and do nobody harm, if they do not also live a holy and heavenly life, and forsake all for another world.'

Answer 1. 'It is but selfishness and blindness which maketh men call him an honest man, and speak lightly of his wickedness, who preferreth the dung and trifles of this world before his Maker, and everlasting glory. . . . It is so far from being incredible that the unholy should be damned and only the holy saved, that the contrary is impossible.' "

MR. F. DALTON, of Eyebrow, Canada, says :—

"I have been expecting a report of the meeting of the Committee to consider the Methodist doctrinal difficulty. I should very much like to hear the result."

Personally, I very much hope that we shall soon give full publicity to the proceedings of that Committee. The idea that doctrine is a matter for ministers only is one which we have often traversed in these columns, and as soon as the laity acquiesce in that idea we know that decay has set in. Let the laymen and laywomen of Methodism call loudly and determinedly for public reports of all matters affecting doctrine. In this province as in others, we must remember the warning of our Lord, "Men love darkness rather than light because their works are evil."

The Church Wanted !

"What England needs to-day is a truly Scriptural Evangelical Church."—Rev. Harold C. Morton, B.A., in "The Alternatives for Methodism," page 99 of the *Journal* for May.

THE CHURCH—Ecclesia—"called out" from those
Who sit in judgment on the Sacred Word—
Those who oppose
Their thoughts to Revelations from the Lord.

THE CHURCH, the prophet pictured, formed of such,
Whose conscience trembles at the Word Divine ;
Men who will touch
With awe the Book where Heavenly glories shine.

THE CHURCH built on the Rock Peter portrayed :
"Thou art the Christ, Son of the Living God."—
Which, unafraid,
Will tread the path of Faith Apostles trod.

Lord ! leave to our dear land a faithful flock
True to the Bible, to the Cross, and Thee ;
'Gainst which the shock
Of Doubt or Cultured Scorn beats harmlessly.

WILLIAM OLNEY.

THE VALUELESSNESS OF A NEW GOD.

If the god is *new*, it is not God ; if the god is real, he is not *new*. So with theological theories, doctrines, speculations, and confidences. He who can adopt a new god can give a new god up. A new god that has come newly up can be easily abandoned. Have no faith in lovers of novelty. They will become accustomed to your love and cast it off as a burden. Men cannot love novelty in theology, and yet love antiquity and thoroughly solid establishments in friendship, in household love, or in commercial confidences.—*Joseph Parker.*

Acknowledgments.

The following sums, over and above the annual *Journal* Subscription, have been sent to us during the past month :—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
A "Friend"	0	4	0	Mr. W. Sales	0	10	0
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Mr. H. Heath	0	2	0	The late Miss Nightingale	0	10	0
Mr. R. Jago	0	3	0	Small Sums	0	6	0

Our thanks are presented to all our friends.

To Our Subscribers.

The Secretary is moving this August from Plymouth to 8 Granville Road, Hove, Brighton.

Will our friends note the change of address; but please do not send to him any communication whatever, unless it is absolutely necessary, during the months of August and September.

In October he will be glad to receive all unpaid Subscriptions, either to the end of 1918, or with 3/- added to the end of 1919.

With the beginning of 1919, we are reluctantly compelled to increase the subscription to 3/- per annum. post free.

For aggressive work in defence of the Scriptures we are urgently in need of more Funds.

If any of our Subscribers have copies of the February *Journal*, 1918, to spare, the Secretary will be very glad to receive them.

The Journal of the Wesley Bible Union.

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SEPTEMBER, 1918.

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Methodist Union and the Question of Doctrine.

REV. HAROLD C. MORTON, B.A.

The supreme aspect of the question of Methodist Union is the doctrinal aspect. If the Methodist Churches are divided by no question of real substance, such as doctrine, then the advantages of union may very well outweigh the advantages of separate existence. But if there are differences of real substance, especially such as concern the message of the Church to the world, then the fact that union is a very popular and important watchword must not lead us to sacrifice the interests of the Kingdom, or to let slip from us what God has put into our hand. Therefore, before our Church takes any further steps in the direction of Methodist Union, it ought to weigh carefully the doctrinal issues involved. No one will pretend that this, really initial, step has yet been taken. In the advocacy of Methodist Union, Doctrine has not yet been considered except to the extent of asserting, I fear quite too lightly, that there are no doctrinal differences which divide the various Methodist Churches.

My object in this article is to call attention to this supreme aspect of the subject, and to obtain if possible due consideration for it and the true understanding of the issue which only full consideration can ensure. The questions we need to ask and answer are these :—Will the other Methodist Churches be willing to accept our Standards of Doctrine ? Or shall we be ready to accept theirs ? Or shall we all of us be willing to accept a new Doctrinal Statement ? For Wesleyan Methodists the vital question is :—Are we ready to lay aside our Standards of Doctrine and accept such a new statement as would to-day be drafted ? For I believe it to be quite certain the other Churches would not accept our Standards. Indeed, very many in our own borders do not accept them to-day.

Let us clearly have in our minds what manner of statement would probably be devised if the theological tutors of the various colleges—or indeed any other body of Methodist theologians—drafted a doctrinal statement to-day. They are practically all of them committed to German rationalistic criticism (called the “higher criticism”) and to Darwinian evolution. Almost to a man they would be held to be “advanced” thinkers, although I believe them as a matter of fact to be living in the past generation of intellectual thought. That is characteristic of “advanced thought” when it is found in broad theological circles. The scientific theorist’s cast-off clothing becomes the fashionable attire of the new theologian ! Haeckel admitted years ago that he himself was the last German scientist of note to retain his belief in Darwinianism. I very much fear that some of our theologians have also so irrevocably committed themselves to German rationalism that when this generation has joyfully buried its discredited corpse they will cling to Rationalism’s cast-off clothing also. The dire alternative will be to disown their books, and that would be too bitter and too hard a thing. But realising that our theologians are in ruinous number and measure committed to rationalism and Darwinianism, we must have our eyes open to the kind of doctrinal statement which they would be almost certain to propose in place of the magnificent doctrinal statements which form the Standards of our Church to-day.

The two great Methodist Churches beside our own are the Primitive Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church—the latter being the outcome of the recent union of

the United Free Methodist Church, the Methodist New Connexion, and the Bible Christian Methodist Church, sometimes called "Bryanites." The doctrinal statements of these two Churches take a very different form from that of our own Standards. They are by comparison very brief, and while they contain definite statements upon some points which our own are contented to assume rather than state, on the other hand there are omissions, differences in the substance of statements, a vagueness and indeterminateness on one or two great doctrines, which deserve very careful attention. The two doctrinal statements are as follows : and, first, I give that of the United Methodist Church, quoting from the Year Book of that Church.

I.—The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, through Divine inspiration, contain a revelation of the will of God to man, and furnish a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

II.—There is one God, the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of all things, Who is above all and through all and in all. And, in the mystery of His being, there are three persons in the one Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

III.—The Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God, in the unity of His being at once human and Divine, truly God and truly man.

IV.—Man as a moral being is free and responsible, and in the exercise of his freedom has fallen into sin and condemnation.

V.—The Lord Jesus Christ in His life and death perfectly manifested the righteousness and love of God : and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, He made atonement for the sins of the whole world. He was raised from the dead, and received up into glory, and now reigns Lord over all.

VI.—God wills not the death of any sinner, but requires repentance towards Himself and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as necessary to salvation.

VII.—Believers are justified by faith through the grace of God, are born again from above, and by the life of obedient faith, perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

VIII.—The Holy Spirit of God illuminates the minds of men, convicts of sin, leads into all truth, gives assurance of salvation and sonship, and dwells in every believer to strengthen and sanctify.

IX.—The Holy Catholic Church is the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who, being united to Christ their Head, are one Body in Him, and have communion with their Lord and with one another.

X.—It is the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible brotherhood, for the worship of God, for the manifestation of His Spirit and teaching in the service of man, and for the extension of His Kingdom throughout the world.

XI.—The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are of Divine appointment.

XII.—There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the righteous and the wicked ; the Lord Jesus Christ will be the Judge

of all men ; and they who have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation.

Perhaps I had better at once proceed to give the official statement on Doctrine from the Year Book of the Primitive Methodist Church. There has been a good deal of discussion in that Church regarding proposed changes in its Doctrinal Statement ; but no change has up to the present time actually been made. The Statement, which is entitled, "Doctrines," is, I am informed, the authoritative statement of the Church itself :—

The Primitive Methodist Church is composed of Protestant Christians, who hold the following doctrines :—

- a.* The Being of God, including the Holy Trinity.
- b.* The proper Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c.* The innocence of our first parents when they were first created.
- d.* Their fall and that of their posterity.
- e.* General Redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- f.* Repentance, including godly sorrow for sin and corresponding reformation.
- g.* The justification by faith of the ungodly on their turning to God.
- h.* The witness of the Holy Spirit to their adoption into the family of God.
- i.* Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, producing inward and outward holiness.
- j.* The Resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.
- k.* The General Judgment, and Eternal Rewards and Punishments.

In all Christian Doctrine the fundamental position is the Doctrine of Holy Scripture. Everything depends upon that. The Scriptures are our supreme instructor concerning God, Man, Salvation, Destiny, and all the great questions of life. All ideas gained from all other realms must be brought to the test of Scripture. Accordingly our own Standards are very plain, definite, and precise regarding Scripture. They claim that the Scriptures are the Word of God, preserved from error by the inspiration of the writers by the Holy Ghost, and therefore our infallibly true and authoritative guide. It is therefore with great surprise that we find the Primitive Methodist Statement makes no reference at all to Scripture. This is a very extraordinary omission, and manifestly leaves the way open to the introduction of all manner of teachings with respect to the Bible.

The Statement of the United Methodist Church strikes me as being a hardly less serious thing than the omission of the Primitive Methodist Church. The Scriptures, it

declares, "contain a revelation of the will of God to man, and furnish a sufficient rule of faith and practice." Upon this and other matters which emerge from the two statements I hope to comment next month.

The "Camouflage" of the Cross.

Extract from "THE OVERCOMER."

"Fidei Coticula Crux" (*"The Cross is the touchstone of faith"*) is a motto which the children of God need to-day to keep perpetually in mind, for there is a "camouflage" of the Cross, taking place in multitudinous forms, which needs drastic stripping away if multitudes are not to lose their road to heaven, and miss their mark for eternity.

The word "camouflage" is one which has come into popular language since it was first used to describe the hiding, or covering over, of certain important munitions or places, from the eyes of enemy airmen. It may therefore be used aptly to picture a veiling of the Cross planned by our Adversary the Devil, whereby, in all kinds of ways, he endeavours to hide the Cross of Calvary from the people. The things which are used for "camouflaging" may be all innocent and good. It matters not what they are, so that they hide the desired object from the foe. Even so, the Adversary is now using the very language of the Bible in carrying out his age-long work of hiding, or covering the Cross. And many who trust in the Crucified Christ for salvation innocently help him; yes, and many who are faithful messengers of the Gospel help him, because they do not see through his "wiles" or strategy. *They do not bring everything to the touchstone of the Cross, nor test by this touchstone much that is beautiful and even true, but when closely looked into proves to be valueless, because it is without the foundation of Calvary. Every thing hangs on this. The first question to-day over every kind of religious "teaching," should be to ask its relation or attitude to the one perfect, and completed, sacrifice for sin made at Golgotha by the God Man, Jesus Christ.*

Spiritism, Theosophy, New Theology, Christian Science, can all be tested by the touchstone of the Cross, *not merely by words about a "cross," but by asking for a definite acknow-*

ledgment of the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only hope for sinners, as set forth in unequivocal language in the Scriptures. There is no need for *Christians*, who know they are true "Christians" only by faith in the Crucified Lamb of God, to "enquire into Spiritism," or to ponder long over the why and wherefore of the mental healings of Christian Science, if they will but use the "touchstone" of Calvary, when they will quickly find that none of these latter day substitutes for the Gospel of Christ will admit men to be *sinners*, saved only through the propitiatory sacrifice of the Cross.

We have been forewarned in the Scriptures, that at the "time of the end," there would be an "Apostasy" of professing Christians from the "faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3 *marg.*), and that its main characteristic would be "denying the Lord that *bought* them," *i.e.*, the substitutionary work of Christ, wherein He "bought" those He died for with the price of His precious blood (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

"Apostasy" (falling away), writes Dr. Schofield in his Bible notes, "is the act of professed Christians who deliberately reject revealed truth," (1) as to the *Deity* of Jesus Christ, and (2) redemption through his atoning and redeeming sacrifice (1 John iv. 1-3, Phil. iii. 18, 2 Pet. ii. 1). "Apostasy," he remarks, "differs from *error* concerning truth, which may be the result of ignorance (Acts xix. 1-6), or *heresy*, which may be due to the snare of Satan (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26), both of which may consist with true faith." He adds that the "apostate" is perfectly described in 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but . . . heap to themselves teachers [and] turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables."

"Fables" are stories that have no foundation in fact, and no one who reads them thinks of staking anything vital upon them. The stories may be beautiful and even inspiring, but if they are not based on "truth" even children reject them as valueless. So should it be with all true children of God, as they meet with the multitudinous mass of "fables," which in these days of apostasy, multitudes are substituting for the pure truth of God. All teachings and doctrines can be described as "fables," if they are not based upon the central fact of the Gospel—the death of Christ for sinners—for they

all "camouflage" the Cross, and *other truths vitally connected with the atoning sacrifice of Calvary.*

But there are numbers of true believers not well grounded in the Scriptures, who are unable to discriminate between the "fables" and the truth of God when the "fables" are presented in Christian guise. Spiritism, Theosophy and such like, boldly declare their tenets, but it does not occur to many that the adversary can "camouflage" the Cross by *lifting up the Christ Himself as an "Example"* to be followed by the natural man, apart from the regenerating work of the Spirit of God through the redemption of Calvary. Many have not yet realized that as the apostasy advances, a special peril of the children of God will be the apostasy *hidden under the camouflage of the "Gospel"* itself, with the omission of the one vital truth which alone makes it a true "gospel" to a lost and ruined world (See *1 Cor. xv. 3-5*).

"In determining the exact point of the truth that is omitted," writes Chafer (in his "Satan and the Satanic System"), "it is important to distinguish between the *Person* and *work* of Christ. In the one is included His teachings and examples, both in His life and death; in the other is included His substitutionary, sacrificial and atoning death for the sin of the world. There is no controversy as to the value and example of Jesus, but (there is) ever increasing antagonism against the Blood of His Cross. . . ." That is, men will agree to the lifting up of the *Person of Christ* who do not admit the one vital saving truth of His atoning *work* at Calvary.

In view of this increasing peril, it is most important that all who personally know, by the witness of the Spirit, the saving truth of the Atoning Cross of Christ, should understand its message as the touchstone for the bringing to the proof (2 Tim. iv. 2, R.V. *m.*) all kinds of "gospels" flooding the world at the present time. But many true Christians are unprepared to meet the peril of the "camouflaging of the Cross," by the lifting up of the *Person of Christ* with the message of His gospel omitted, because they do not acutely realize the peril, nor see how the apostasy is surging in upon even the children of God, in new and attractive ways, necessitating on the part of all who would be faithful to the gospel of Christ, a persistent ringing testimony to the Lord who bought them, undeceived by any camouflage gospels of to-day.

As an illustration of how the Cross of Christ may be camouflaged by a powerful presentation of His Person, without a clear witness to His Atoning Work, we have exampled at the present time in a book, "As Tommy Sees Us," written by a chaplain to the troops, which is having a wide circulation. It is written with a frankness and warmth of heart, which deeply moves the reader, as the writer strips away with a steady and skilful hand, the "camouflage" which the churches of the present time have thrown around the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in doing so we grieve to see that he has also touched the *essentials of His Gospel*, for there are sentences in the book which strike the reader, loyal to the authority of the Word of God and its message of redemption through the blood of the Cross, with dismay. Sentences which, viewed in the light of eternity, and the plain statements of the Scriptures, cannot but depreciate the value of all that is written, however true and earnest it may all be.

In this masterly book the *Person* of Christ with "His teachings and example both in life and death" is beautifully set forth, but His *work* in His "substitutionary, sacrificial atoning death" is not clearly referred to! The only "cross" mentioned is the cross of "self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and service"—a cross *which does not mean salvation*. This may explain why the writer thinks that the God-honoured hymn, "Ere since by faith I saw the stream, Thy flowing wounds supplied, Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die," is unsuitable for Tommy to sing! Alas, the Cross of Christ in its glory as the place where the Lamb of God shed His Blood as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, *seems to be "camouflaged" to the writer*, for he refers to Tommy's inability to understand "metaphysical theology," and "views of the Atonement" held by "good and able men," as though the VIEW OF THE ATONEMENT GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT to men when they acknowledge they are sinners, is unknown to him. We earnestly hope that this is not so, but those who have been convicted of sin at Calvary, and known the power of the Blood of Christ to deliver from the guilt and power of sin, find it impossible to relegate the atoning sacrifice of Christ to the sphere of "metaphysical theology," or hold views about it given through any able men.

But, alas, deeper still does the writer touch the essentials of the gospel, when he says that "it is not natural to man to

suppose that *he must have an infallible book* in order to have a reliable religion." This sentence, taken with other sentences, suggest that the Higher Criticism, or "modern," attitude to the Bible underlies all that the writer has so beautifully written. If so, this is why the "Cross" is "camouflaged." If the Scripture revelation of God's way of dealing with sin by giving His Son to die for a guilty fallen race, is not set forth in an infallible Book, we have no "reliable religion," and our faith is vain.

Herein is the subtle inroad of the Apostasy disclosed. Strike at the authority of the message, and the message is discredited. *Fidei Cotricula Crux*. The message of the Cross, and the authority of the Word of God hang together. How appallingly Satan is seeking to turn to his own advantage every aspect of the Great War. Let men be heroes and nobly give their lives for their country, and the devil sets going the "fable" that such sacrifice is a passport to heaven, thus "camouflaging" the Cross and the Crucified One who died for sinners. Let the church utterly fail in presenting a Living Saviour to the people, and to make the churches a "home" for all who seek to serve God, the very truth about all this, splendidly, honestly told, with conviction which commands the response of every honest reader, covers the weakening of the authority of the Word of God.

We have been warned by a preacher recently, that there was "developing a direct attack on the central conception of what had been supposed to be Christianity, which when it was matured, WOULD LEAVE LITTLE OF THE ORIGINAL FABRIC UNTOUCHED." "I will have nothing to do," said the preacher, "no part or lot in, this dismal dirge of the crucifixion." We are now seeing more clearly one way in which this "direct attack," forged and directed by the master mind of Satan (oft-times using innocent instruments), is "developing." He will destroy all faith in the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God, so as to "camouflage" the Cross.

Another present day "camouflage" of the Cross, is the very widespread "teaching" of the "Divine spark in every man," which has only to be "developed," contradicting the Bible revelation of the Fall of man, and in its issue destroying the need for the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and a new birth. This aspect of the modern "gospel," to our sorrow, we came across recently in the official organ of the British

Young Women's Christian Association, in a paper written by the Headquarters Educational Secretary, on "The Meaning of the Incarnation." Again, the article is beautifully written, and apparently full of the "Bible," but the writer says, "that God did become incarnate in Man means that every single human being has something divine in his nature. However degraded, however covered up this divine spark may be, it is there in every one of us." But the Infallible Word declares that men out of Christ are "WITHOUT GOD," and "WITHOUT HOPE in the world," until they are "made nigh" to God "in the blood of Christ" (Ephes. ii. 12, 13). The Incarnation of Christ was *with a view to His Death as a propitiation for sin*. He did not become incarnate in "Man" as *man*, but became a Man Himself (Phil. iii. 7), so that He might die instead of fallen men, and bring them back to God.

Oh, sad "camouflage" of the Cross! Is a "gospel" which is "not a gospel" being given to masses of the troops, and to the women who are giving themselves to labour for their country? Is the Apostasy of the last days to penetrate the *evangelical church*, and *evangelical* Christian work? We urge all children of God to awaken to the peril of the hour, and faithfully and lovingly stand for the truth of the Gospel of Calvary, and to grasp clearly, and declare boldly with no uncertain sound, that the only saving gospel for "Tommy," and for the women who are seeking to serve their country in its need, is that which is set forth in the infallible Word of God, "that Christ DIED for our sins according to the Scriptures. . . ." (1 Cor. xv. 3-4). "*The Cross is the touchstone of faith.*" Let us apply it, and see to it that no "camouflage" of the Cross shall hide the glory of its true message, and its power in these solemn times.

Notes.

A Fatal Misuse of the Factor of Christian Experience.

We should like to warn our readers against an argument which has so much of the appearance of truth in it that it is calculated to deceive even the elect. For many years gone by, the modernist school has sought to lay emphasis upon Christian experience. They have exalted it into the place of supreme evidential importance. It proves the Christian Faith, they contend—although the New Testament gives the supreme evidential place to the Resurrection of our Lord, and declares that Resurrection to be the

proof of Christian verity. All this we have long been familiar with: but very few seem yet to have understood to what all this magnifying of experience is intended to lead.

This line of thought is specially calculated to mislead Methodists. We have cultivated personal testimony, and given a larger place and higher honour than most Churches to personal experience. Therefore this modernist argument must find us open-eyed. The "advanced thinker" says, first: "We believe in the forgiveness of sins, in the Witness of the Spirit, and in entire sanctification." Then he proceeds to say: "The whole object of the Christian Revelation is this personal experience." So far it all sounds well, though it is open to some questionings. But then he proceeds, thirdly, to conclude: "Nothing else matters. The only doctrines we need to be deeply concerned about are the doctrines of the experience of salvation. Indeed," he says, "these are the only ones we can be sure about, because these are the only ones we can verify for ourselves."

"Salvation Hanging upon Nothing."

Then at last we see clearly, or at least begin to see clearly, what all this modernist argument from experience is about. The aim is to establish a doctrine of personal salvation which shall be independent of the other great doctrines of the Christian Faith. The modernist plan is this:—Having first displaced the Scriptures from their infallible place as The Word of God, revealing to us what is otherwise beyond our ken, the next step is to maintain the relative unimportance of anything beyond the individual's personal experience. The doctrines of the experience of salvation are to be maintained: the rest left to individual statement and private judgment. The assumption is that we can have salvation without any certainty of, or even perhaps any belief in, those great underlying truths of the Trinity, the Infallibility and Deity of our Lord, the Substitutionary Atonement, and so forth, upon which all possibility of the Christian salvation ultimately rests.

In keeping with this it is a very favourite statement among Modernists that the New Testament is the expression of the experience of the early Christians: and that the Scriptures are only authoritative when speaking to us the "redemptive word." Often the "Authority" of Holy Scripture is allowed and its revelation exalted: but when we ask how it is that those, who thus exalt the revelation contained in the Scriptures, at the same time charge these very Scriptures with error, we find that they mean only that the Scriptures are recognised as an authoritative revelation in matters of personal experience, which the Modernist vouches for himself. And so the Christian Preacher's Authority is said to be "his own, and the Lord's."

In one of those remarkable "flashes of thought" which display the wonderful scientific accuracy of the Scriptures, Job xxvi. 7 declares of the Almighty: "He hangeth the earth upon nothing"—a fact which human science discovered some thousands of years later. But God has not made human salvation to hang upon nothing. Our salvation rests upon those great supernatural truths concerning the Triune God and His work for humankind, which human experience can never prove. They can only become known to us by revelation from the All-Wise and Almighty.

What Methodism is Losing.

Wesleyan Methodism has been declared to be losing its message, its conviction, and its passion. What else can happen to any Church which gives such an exaggerated place to experience, and is tending to relegate everything else to a place of comparative unimportance? Experience cannot float on the air. Salvation is not a philosophy, maintained on the breath of speculation, and somehow realising itself at times in human life.

Salvation is the necessary outcome of those sublime underlying facts of existence which God has revealed to us. Message, conviction, and passion—all are drawn, not from salvation, but from these sublime facts upon which salvation rests. Salvation is an effect, not a cause: the radiance, not the fire. Passion must be kindled not by the radiance, but by the mighty central fire itself.

Let us give heed to ourselves! We members of the Bible Union must realise and practice and demonstrate that fact. Let us so read, so meditate, so pray, that message, conviction, passion shall be ours. "While I meditated the fire kindled, and at the last I spake with my tongue."

Let us Hold Fast to REALITY.

Amid all the facile calls for unity which fill the air to-day, let us hold fast to Reality. It is easy to talk of unity: the real fact is that there is wider separation between English Christians to-day than there has been for a century gone by.

We took occasion some time ago to warn our readers of the emptiness, the inevitable emptiness of words of friendship toward Methodism, when those words are spoken by advanced Romanisers like the Bishop of London. We note that recently the *English Churchman* and *St. James' Chronicle* has been uttering some plain words on this subject, which Methodists would do well to lay to heart. In an article upon "Evangelical Reunion" the editor points out that the idea of the "reunion of Christendom" has lost its charm—largely because Rome has been manifested in her true light during this war, and no one would now regard as even reputable the proposal to unite with her. But though the vast reunion is not just now a popular watch-word, a lesser reunion within our English borders is the obsession of the hour.

The Glamour of Outward Amalgamation.

"The glamour of outward amalgamation" some persons cannot get away from, and so some Episcopalians have begun to make overtures to their "dissident brethren" in this country.

"Thus we observe that the Bishop of London has of late been loud in his demonstrations of affection for the Wesleyan Methodists, and the expression of his hopeful longing that they will return to the maternal fold. The trouble is that these sentimental efforts always break down in practice. Real fellowship with 'our dear separated brethren,' like that of Kikuyu, calls forth a storm of reprobation. United communions are anathema. If the Prime Minister be announced to read the lessons at a service in Westminster Abbey, the outcry is forthwith loud and bitter. Mr. Lloyd George happens to be a Nonconformist, and the notion of a Nonconformist taking a prominent part in Anglican worship is too preposterous for words."

We never feel so little proud of Methodism as we do when she seems to forget all her distinctive Bible principles, and equally to forget how firm is her Bible standing-ground and authority and commission, and almost greedily lends her ear to the wooing words of some "Lord Bishop" or other celebrity. Never are we so ready as then to glory in the brave old Puritan pamphlet entitled: "Lord Bishops Not the Lord's Bishops." Methodism is far too ready to be "ravished by the whistling of a name" when some celebrated and plausible personage approaches her. She ought to hold hard to the Scriptures, realise how strong her position then is, and refuse to welcome those who do not hold hard with her. The Sacerdotalist comes with personal sacerdotal pretensions: he cannot but be condescending and plausible, rather than truly brotherly and sincere. The Bible Christian meets him clothed in the Authority of Holy Scripture, and need feel neither

flattered by sacerdotal attentions, nor desirous of sacerdotal support. The Sacerdotal and the Evangelical systems cannot be reconciled. *The English Churchman* declares :—

“The two systems are fundamentally at variance, and all the talk about their fusion into a corporate unity is so much sanctified pretence.”

“*Sanctified pretence*”! Rather let us say, “*Sanctimonious pretence*.” It is a degradation to both parties. No one honours the spider, or respects the fly who listens to his offers. Let Evangelicals really **BELIEVE**, and faith will prove mightier than sacerdotal pretension.

Secret Treaties in the Light of August 4th.

It is with no little uneasiness that we have perused the “Secret Treaties” made between Allied Governments during the War. The Bolsheviks, who published them, are beneath contempt: but even the lowest traitors may in their evil accomplish some good—and we English Christians ought to have very distinct convictions about these treaties.

We have publicly declared that we aim at Peace in future years by enforcing such conditions of settlement as will remove causes of strife. Especially we have declared that the peoples of disputed territories shall determine for themselves their future allegiance. They shall choose what Government they shall have, or with what country they shall be incorporated.

The Secret Treaties do not *appear*, in promising this territory to one Ally and that territory to another, to give such heed to nationality as our expressed war aims should have ensured. However, be that as it may, it seems quite certain that in promising territories beforehand to the various Allies after victory is secured, (as, for example, on the eastern Adriatic Sea-board), the principle of Self-Determination is swept on one side.

This will not do. It cannot be defended. Open speech promising Self-Determination: but, practically all through the war, that is by all our own Governments, treaties made secretly, setting aside Self-Determination! This is the kind of “statecraft” on which Christians should speak strongly. The acknowledgment of God on August 4th demands also “fruits meet for repentance.” Our cause is too high and too sacred to be sullied in this way.

The League of Nations.

All who have thought about this great Christian policy know how it bristles with difficulties. But it is worth striving for; and if Christians do not strive for it, who will? The present League, which we call the “Allies,” must be kept on the heights of lofty purpose and clear vision—for it seems clear that the hope of a future League of Nations lies in the perpetuation of the present Alliance for the defence of the weak and the good of humankind.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon in Prayer.

Everyone speaks with enthusiastic admiration of Dr. Parker’s published prayers; and well they may be praised. Perhaps, there are no printed prayers in existence more worthy of admiration. Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s printed prayers, very different, are quite equal to those of Joseph Parker, though they are not so often spoken about, and are probably less widely known. Indeed, we are inclined to think for deep devotional quality they surpass those of Dr. Parker, and are probably superior in felicity of expression, as, indeed, they unquestionably are in chaste simplicity. Our readers would do themselves great service by possessing themselves of a little volume of Spurgeon’s prayers, entitled: “*The Pastor in Prayer*” (published

by *Elliot Stock*). We have been led to notice this here because we felt that we should like to pass on to our readers one or two extracts from one of these prayers, specially bearing on the objects of this *Journal*.

The Pastor's Heart-Sorrow Concerning the Enemies of Faith.

The following will move the hearts of all who mourn for the devastations of the prevalent apostasy :—

Still, Lord, we have a burden which we must lay before Thee, and ask Thee to help us in it. We mourn over the condition of Thy Church, for on every side as we look around we see men endeavouring to undermine the doctrines of the everlasting Gospel. Time was when a man was famous for lifting up his axe upon the trees of the forest, but now they with axes break the carved work of Thy sanctuary. They despoil Thy truth. There is scarcely a single doctrine of Thy word which the wise men among us do not deny. Yea, and those that pretend to be ministers of the Gospel are amongst the first to speak against it, and to denounce it, and to sanction licence to sin because Thou wilt no more punish it, and to declare that Jesus Christ is not Thy Son. O Lord our God, our heart often sinks within us ; we are apt to wish to lay our hand upon the ark to steady it, for the oxen shake it. But we know it is in Thy hand, and having spread the case before Thee, we leave it there. Many a Rabshakeh's letter have we read of late : behold, we bring them into the sanctuary and spread them before the Lord. O Lord our God, rebuke the unbelief, rebuke the scepticisms of those who assail both Thee and Thy Christ, and the Gospel of Thy truth.

Prayer for the Antidote to Antichristian Error.

The prayer from which we quoted above proceeds thus :—

We pray Thee thus to rebuke the unbelief of this age. Revive deep spirituality in the hearts of Thine Own children. Oh that we might live so near to the Great Shepherd as to be familiar with His voice, to know its tones, so that a stranger we may not follow, for we know not the voice of strangers. If it were possible, they would deceive even the very elect, and how shall Thine elect be kept from their deceptions but by abiding in the truth, and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. Oh revive Thy Church, we pray Thee, in this respect ! Give to those who know Thee intenser faith in the eternal verities, burning into us by experience the things which we do know ; may they be beyond all question to us. And may we never be ashamed to glory in the good old way, the way the fathers trod, the way which leads to Heaven and to God. May we not be ashamed to vindicate it, and to bear reproach ; for Thy Gospel has of old been to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, and so we expect it ever to be a stumbling block to those who go after the way of superstition, and also to be foolishness to the wise men of the world. O God, again confuse the knowledge of men by what they think to be the foolishness of the Gospel. Again let it be seen that the foolishness of God is wiser than men. O Jesus, Son of the Highest, we know that the truth is powerful, because Thou art the soul of it—the very essence of it. Put Thy life into it, we pray Thee. May the Eternal Spirit go with every word which God-sent ministers shall proclaim, and may the Lord grant that as the mists fly before the wind, so error and superstition may be driven away by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in all the glory of His brightness.

Rev. Arthur Hoyle in the "Methodist Recorder" on the Influence of the War upon Theology.

In the *Methodist Recorder* of August 8th Rev. Arthur Hoyle has an article, entitled : "*Padre, You Ought to Know*," in which he touches upon the question of the changes which the War is likely to produce on our theological outlook. We expect ourselves that there will be changes. We regard the War as probably being the birth-throes of a new age, and we hail with satisfaction that Mr. Hoyle seems to look to the War as constituting a vindication of the doctrine of the Cross. Some recent theology has said a great deal that is extremely excellent on this subject. A great many of the recent books dealing with religion in its relation to the War are full

of deadly errors, but there are notable exceptions, and these not a few. Those who have not had the privilege of reading these exceptions should be careful not to conclude that their reading is the criterion of what they have not read. We have no doubt that our general outlook will be much changed in many directions, and that when we look at things in the light of the happenings in these years, we shall understand as men have never yet understood that line of Charles Wesley :—

"See, the Suffering God appears."

But when Mr. Hoyle refers to the heresy created by the War which he has heard talked in our Conference during the War, and when he speaks as if now to him Dr. W. B. Pope's "*Person of Christ*" is a book that "might be sent to the pulping mills," we feel that Mr. Hoyle looks to the War as likely to prove a rationalizing solvent in Christian doctrine. The value of the Cross of Calvary depends upon the Godhead of Christ maintained in Dr. Pope's great book, a doctrine that is eternal, a doctrine never to be pulped. The ultimate theological effect of the War will, we have no doubt, be that the stars will shine all the brighter, when the War-smoke has been cleared away. But there are great perils lest the War should introduce heresies that will work awful havoc amongst the souls of men, such as Salvation by death on the battle field, Probation after death, Prayers for the dead and to the dead, and other things we might name, such as an endeavour to shake all denominations into a great anarchic mass called a united church with a colourless creed, devoid of principles, that will not be united in anything but name, but only be a seething mass of fermenting contraries repelling each other in the jostle of an irreconcilable confusion.

Dr. W. B. Pope on Prayers for and to the Dead.

In his great book, "*The Prayers of St. Paul*," Dr. Pope says :—

St. Paul is not more earnest in praying for others than he is earnest in desiring others to pray for him. But he who hath such boundless faith in the efficacy of the mutual intercession of perfect charity among fellow-Christians upon earth, keeps the most absolute silence as to the interchange of prayers between the living and the dead ; and this silence is a most effectual reproof by anticipation of a great error. St. Paul prays for the Churches and for Timothy down to the very last ; but, when he is about to depart, and seems to be looking back already as from another world upon his son left to fight the good fight alone, he does not say : "I will not cease to pray for thee !" Sometimes he dwells on the communion of the two world's in a strain that would have required him to tell us if that communion had included mutual intercession.

"Q. E. D."

REV. W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, D.D.

In a new book with the above title* a Professor of Chemistry and Physics in California, G. M. Price, offers what he calls "New Light on the Doctrines of Creation," and in the course of eight chapters discusses several of the most important aspects of the subject. In his Preface he points out that

* New York and London : Fleming H. Revell Company.

there are only two theories of the origin of our world, Creation and Evolution. Evolution is an effort to show that life in all its forms originated by causes similar to or identical with forces and processes now prevailing, and on this account it teaches the supremacy and continuity of natural law, as now observed. Changes are going on in the world have, it is said, always been in action, and are as much a part of the origin of things as anything that took place in the past. Creation, on the other hand, emphasizes the idea of a "beginning," that the origin of a new world, as we know it, was essentially different from the ways in which it is sustained to-day, and that it came about by a direct and unusual manifestation of Divine power. Evolution is established by showing that matter can be made *de novo*, that energy can be created or increased in amount, that life can be made from the not-living, and that new and distinct forms of life can be produced in modern times—all by existing natural law. Creation is proved if it is possible to show that the forces now in operation can never account for the origin of things, that matter, energy and life must all have had an origin essentially different from anything now going on.

Professor Price favours the latter view and complains that, in spite of the universal spread of education, the common people are still being taught what real scientists outgrew nearly a generation ago, and "assertions are still being bandied around which are wholly unwarranted by a general survey" of modern science. In regard to matter, it is contended that even now we do not know how it ever could have originated, except that it was called into existence by the fiat of God, and, the plain lesson to be drawn from existing phenomena is not the evolution, but the degeneration of matter. In his chapter dealing with "The Origin of Energy," Professor Price maintains that on scientific grounds "Creation is a completed work and is not now going on." In an interesting chapter, "Mendelism and the Origin of Species," Professor Price quotes Professor Bateman to the effect, that if Mendel's work had come into the hands of Darwin, "it is not too much to say that the history of the development of evolutionary philosophy would have been very different from that which we have witnessed" (p. 78).

But it is when Professor Price comes to discuss geology and its lessons that he provides some novel and interesting

facts and arguments of his own. After pointing out that the highest scientific authorities believe the evidence furnished by fossil remains is the strongest we possess in favour of organic evolution, Professor Price remarks that "for seventy-five years geology has not made a single advance movement in its theoretical aspects" (p. 105). And against the theory of successive ages, as usually taught by geologists, five striking arguments are adduced, all supporting the contention that "the geological distinctions as to age between the fossils are fantastic and unjustifiable," and, therefore, that "it by no means follows that the fossils contained in these lower rocks came into being and lived and died before the fossils in the upper ones" (p. 119). The conclusion is, therefore, drawn that, as there is no definite order in which the fossils occur, "life in all its varied forms must have originated on the globe by causes not now operative" (p. 123). The summing up of the book is that modern intelligent men and women cannot avoid any longer the inevitable conviction of a literal creation. On this account Professor Price says that the call of the present hour to the Church of Christ is "for a renewed confidence in that Guide Book which she has brought with her down the centuries."

It seems a duty to call attention to this interesting and striking book. I should like to see its arguments faced by competent scientists, for it seems to carry conviction to non-technical readers, and it is certainly worth careful study by all.

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

No. XXX.

INSPIRATION: TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

BY REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

In present-day discussions on the value and authority of Scripture the question of its Divine Inspiration occupies a prominent and important place. It is therefore needful that the idea of Inspiration should be precisely defined and correctly understood. Inspiration is closely related to Revelation, and yet quite distinct from it. Revelation declares the fact that God has unveiled and made known to men Divine Truth to which, of themselves, they could not attain. Inspiration is the special agency of the Holy Spirit in guiding chosen human instruments in communicating and recording Divine Truth so revealed. When Inspiration is attributed to distin-

guished men, such as Homer, Plato, Bacon, Shakespeare, the word is used in a different sense, as simply denoting the highest forms of natural human genius. But our use of the term Inspiration is entirely related to the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit in enabling chosen men to receive and communicate the truth of God without error and defect.

First of all it is necessary to carefully examine the testimony which the Scripture itself bears to its own Inspiration.

I.—TESTIMONY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. The Old Testament gives its testimony in a manner harmonising with its preliminary stage of development, and yet includes all the elements of the completed doctrine. In early times divine communications were made to many who were not commissioned to write permanent records of them; although it is probable that the Patriarchs recorded some of the revelations that they received. It was the special prerogative of Moses that he was the immediate and direct organ of Jehovah (Deut. 34¹⁰). Of all the inspired messengers whom God raised up Moses approached most nearly to the Great Prophet Whom he predicted (Deut. 18^{15, 18}). Expressions which had not been known before were introduced and used in great variety. We read of "the Spirit of God" or "the Spirit of the Lord coming upon men" (Numb. 24²; 1 Sam. 10⁶; 2 Chron. 15¹); of "the Hand of the Lord moving upon men, and of the Word of the Lord coming to them" (Ezek. 37^{1, 15}). From Moses down to the end of the Old Testament there is the constant commission to write. "The Lord said unto Moses: Write this for a memorial in a book" (Ex. 17¹⁴). There is a large number of references to writing and of commandments to write (Numb. 33²; Hos. 8¹²; Jer. 36¹⁻⁴); and the whole is summed up and designated "The Scripture of Truth" (Dan. 10²¹).

II.—OUR LORD'S TESTIMONY. Our Lord's witness to the Inspiration of both Testaments should, for those who profess to believe in Him, possess supreme weight and value; and should more than outweigh all objections which derive their strength from our ignorance. His testimony to the Old Testament is given in several forms, but to its sacred writings He always ascribes a divine authority. The one thing common to Him and His Jewish opponents was that the Scriptures, which both He and they alike acknowledged, were admitted to be, in all their parts, the Words and Writings of God. He reproached them with the invention of traditions by which they "transgressed the commandment of God, and made it of none effect" (Matt 15^{3, 6}). But He does not charge them with any unfaithfulness or meddling with the Scripture itself. While sweeping away their vain traditions He emphatically declares that the least ordinance and the least commandment of the Old Testament is divine; and that every "jot and tittle" must be fulfilled (Matt. 5^{18, 19}). He designates the Old Testament writings collectively as "Scripture," and separately as "Scriptures" (Matt. 21⁴², 22²⁹; Mark 14⁴⁹; Luke 4²¹; John 5³⁹). He calls an oracle "the Word of God," and then adds: "And the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10³⁵). He divides the documents into "the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms"; and in the very next word sums them all up as "the Scriptures" (Luke 24^{27, 44, 45}). In quoting a word of David He expressly declares it to have been given by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 22⁴³). His testimony to the Divine Authority of the Old Testament was given not in accommodation to the current notions of the times, but as the Revealer of Truth. He gives sanction and approval to the whole body of Scripture-writers as

being Himself above them all. In a far higher sense than John the Baptist He was "much more than a prophet" (Luke 7²⁶). He never speaks of Himself as inspired; and never claims for Himself any such Inspiration of the Holy Spirit as He asserted for others: being in this entirely separated from all the agents of the Spirit. He was the Revealer, and chosen disciples were inspired to preserve and record His teaching. As He said that not one jot or tittle of the Old Testament should pass away, so of His own sayings He said: "My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24³⁵). What He taught was the Word of God (John 15¹⁵, 17¹⁴; Col. 3¹⁶). The interchangeable use of the two expressions shows that "the Word of Christ" is "the Word of God." He made provision for His teaching to be embodied in New Scripture Writings. John, like Moses, was commanded to write (Ex. 17¹⁴; Rev. 1¹⁹). The same Spirit Who inspired Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah (Ex. 4¹²; Isa. 59²¹; Jer. 1⁷⁻⁹) was yet more explicitly and fully promised by Christ to His apostles to "speak in them; to bring all things to their remembrance; to show them things to come; and to guide them into all truth" (Mk. 13¹¹; Luke 12¹², 24⁴⁹; John 14²⁶, 16¹³). The fulfilment of the promise required writing as well as speaking, and therefore included both (John 20³¹; Rev. 1¹⁹). The New Testament Scripture was prepared for and produced by the Inspiration of the same Spirit Who gave the Old.

III.—APOSTOLIC TESTIMONY. The Apostles have given abundant testimony both to the fact and to the nature of Inspiration. Their tribute to the Old Testament is distinct and clear. St. Peter speaks of "this Scripture which the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of David, spake before" (Acts 1¹⁶). The Holy Spirit "spake," using "the mouth of David" as the instrument, and the result was "Scripture"; the spoken and written form of it being identical. Again, he says that "holy men of God spake as they were moved (led or borne along) by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1²⁰⁻²¹). The epistle to the Hebrews furnishes an ample series of testimonies. "The force of these is to be felt only by an examination of the texture of the whole composition, which literally regards the ancient Scriptures as oracles spoken by the Holy Ghost, and preserved for the Christian Church in a Book to be quoted as infallible." St. Paul quotes the Old Testament Scriptures constantly, and always as being the Voice and the Writings of God (Acts 28²⁵⁻²⁷). He describes them by several titles, such as "the Prophetic Scriptures," the "Holy Scriptures" or "Sacred Writings," "Scripture given by Inspiration of God" (Rom. 1², 16²⁶; 2 Tim. 3¹⁵⁻¹⁶). The last declares that all Scripture is Divinely inspired. The term *theopneustos* (God-breathed, God-inspired) predicated of *graphe* (Scripture) gives the word Inspiration its Scriptural ground, as showing that the term directly and properly applies to the writings, as well as to the words and persons of the inspired men. St. Paul's manner of introducing individual texts plainly shows the importance that he attached to the very words used by the Holy Spirit, as in Gal. 3¹⁶. Not only do the apostles assert the inspiration of the Old Testament writers but they bear emphatic testimony to their own. Although always conscious of it, it was only on special occasions, and for special purposes, that they would be likely to refer to it. On many occasions, indeed, they purposely abstained from urging their highest authority and claim. St. Peter speaks of the writings of St. Paul as on the same level as "the other Scriptures" (2 Pet. 3¹⁶); and just before this in verse 2 (R.V.) he places the company of the Apostles side by side with the company of the Prophets; and shows

that he regarded himself, as well as his brother Paul, as representatives in their words and writings of the supreme authority of Christ. St. Paul unquestionably claimed the authority of Inspiration. Not being numbered with those who had companied with the Lord and received His promise of the Spirit, it was necessary that he should dwell more pointedly upon his special commission. He ascribes his revelations to Christ as the Revealer (Gal. I ^{11, 12}); Eph. 3 ³⁻⁵; 2 Cor. 12 ¹⁻⁷); but the words used, "words which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2 ¹³), to the Holy Spirit as the Inspirer; and for his minor counsels he says, "I think that I also have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 7 ⁴⁰). His distinction of matters not given "of commandment" (1 Cor. 7 ^{6, 12}) must not be misunderstood. He does not mean that he wrote merely of his own authority; but that in those particular cases he could not, and did not, appeal to any distinct and specific utterance of Christ; but he is never more emphatic and peremptory than in giving decisions which could not be settled by any special word of the Supreme Master. The writers of the New Testament always deliver their message as being received from God their Saviour by His Spirit. They do not often assert their Inspiration, but it is everywhere implied by themselves and supposed to be understood by their hearers and readers. They occupy the same position as their predecessors in the Old Testament. Like them they present the Truth of God from which there is no appeal; and like them, when occasion demands and when their authority is questioned, they declare themselves to be the organs and instruments of the Holy Spirit.

Backward Progress.

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

Evolutionists claim to be the Apostles of Progress. In reality they are deceiving their dupes into a retrograde movement which constitutes a backward march in the direction of substituting for a civilization based upon the ideals of intellect, refinement, and Christianity, the ideals of the animal-creation. According to the evolution theory man is merely an animal, and it bases its ethical system upon the methods which it considers it finds to be the basis of the evolution of species which it attributes to the animal world. Our readers will notice that we carefully choose our words. We do not say the methods which exist in the animal world, but the methods which the evolution theory *attributes* to the animal world. Evolutionism is nothing but *theory*. I believe that the testimony of the fossils not merely fails to sustain the evolution theory, but absolutely *disproves* it. The missing links are the very things missing in the fossils. If there had

been a gradual ascent from the primæval jelly-fish up to man, the creatures constituting the bridge from one species to another, as, for instance, between the anthropoid ape and man, ought to be found amongst the fossils. Their absence demonstrates that they have not existed.

Much of the so-called *progress* of Evolutionism is based upon the doctrine of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, a doctrine which makes *competition* the base-rule of ethics, and reduces human life to a perpetual internecine strife. The system of education founded upon these ideas is one whose conception of the Superman is that he is a being capable of exalting himself, and perpetuating his type by trampling down the weak.

The finished product of this conception is to be seen in the ideals of Germany, many of which seem to constitute the State upon the basis of a family life, the ideal of which is to convert society into a great breeding establishment for the production of the most perfect human animals fitted to be soldiers to achieve the physical victory in the struggle for existence.

Although Nietzsche in terms argued fiercely against some aspects of Evolutionism, whether he was conscious of it or not, his conception of the Superman was very largely framed upon the ideal of the survival of the fittest. He certainly did not carry his notion so far as to advocate a Superman who should be a reversion to the brute ; but he did definitely affirm that the Christian ideal had spoiled the German nation, and that alcoholism, the moral law, and Christianity were the chief obstacles to the onward march of humanity, and must be swept away if the real destiny of man is to be attained. In other words, it is generally understood, that Nietzscheanism is a backward movement of mankind from the ideals of Christianity to those of Greek Paganism.

Nietzsche only represents the full and logical expression of the fundamental thought that lies at the root of Modernist theology. The theologians of that school constantly plead for a new theology on the ground that we must recognize that man's theology must progress *pari passu* with his intellectual advance in other lines of thought ; and under the mask of a professed zeal for progress they are calling upon us to march backwards towards Paganism, and ultimately towards *Brutism*.

For myself, one chief reason that moves me to irreconcilable hostility to Modernist theology is because I know that the abandonment of Bible Religion is not Progress but Retrogression. I have again and again in these columns declared that I believe in progress in theology ; and that it is in the interests of Progress I am opposed to a system of thought which destroys all faith in a direct ascertainable revelation of God, and leads men back to the morasses of human speculation so well described by Paul in his sermon at Athens and in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans ; the times of the ignorance when men groped after God if *haply* they might feel after Him and find Him, and vainly imagined that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone graven by art and man's device ; the times in which men knew God, and yet glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened ; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to the corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonour their own bodies between themselves—(*N.B. See how this displays itself in the beastly doctrines of free-love, legalized prostitution, etc., found in the schools of some so-called Modern Progressives*)—who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. (Acts xvii, Rom. i.)

I am a determined advocate of Progress in theology. I consider that the history of Christian doctrine has been one of steady advance ; and that this advance has been constantly won by controversy with error. Up to the present I believe that the greatest single stride in Christian theology was that which was brought to pass by Methodism, through which, as I think, the doctrines of experimental religion, *as based upon the clear perception of the authoritative inspiration of Holy Scripture and of the Proper Godhead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, have been brought out into clear and definite statement in a way never before attained. I look for a great stride forward to arise from our present struggle against the Modernist apostasy.

It was an axiom often repeated by Dr. W. B. Pope : " Every error in any department of human thought that has ever held

any wide sway over the minds of men owes that sway to some element of truth that is claimed by the promulgators of the error as being the necessary part of their system: and the most effective method of exploding the error is to recognize that truth, and to shew that the truth not only does not carry the error with it, but really destroys it." This axiom seems to me to be so obvious that I imagine that there is no need to defend it. I suppose every sound thinker will accept it.

I maintain that it is of the utmost importance for us to follow this course in our controversy with the Modernist apostasy. These teachers who are subverting the Christian Faith drive home their appeal to the minds of men by the thin end of a wedge of truth which they misuse and pervert to the destruction of men's faith in the Scriptures, and in the absolute, and final authority of Jesus Christ. Space does not permit of my discussing what these truths are. I will only refer to one as an example of many. They constantly affirm that the doctrine of the orthodox is that the atonement of Christ persuades a reluctant God to pardon sin. We need to show that this is a misrepresentation of the evangelical doctrine, and that the doctrine of God's will that "all should be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth," is perfectly compatible with a true and strong doctrine of propitiation. What I say here with regard to one doctrine applies to the whole circle of Christian truth. We want to make it plain that the teachers, who creep into houses and lead men captive by the glamour of their sentimental talk about "the universal fatherhood of God," and the like, are misrepresenting the teachings of evangelical orthodoxy when they persuade their dupes that they alone possess the beautiful truths by which they captivate their victims.

The progress of the past has always been achieved by expounding the Bible, not by repudiating it or correcting it. When new truth has dawned upon the Christian consciousness, the Church has been amazed to discover that it was there in the Bible ready waiting for recognition. No truth has ever been found that contradicts anything that the Bible teaches. No truth has come to light that is an addition to what the Bible teaches. The facts of theological advance prove that nothing can be added to what the Bible teaches, because the Bible is the Word of the Eternal. It is the

Message of the Eternity that overarches all the ages. There can be no advance which is beyond the word of Him who said : "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away*" (Matt. 24³⁵). When any man says to me that we cannot be tethered to the Bible, I always challenge him to mention any new truth which would be a fitting appendix to the Bible. I have never yet had my challenge accepted.

I do not doubt that in God's infinite Bible there are heights, depths, breadths, and lengths that have never yet been explored ; and it is in the interests of progress in theology that I feel it my duty to use all in my powers of thought, entreaty, and argument to contend against those doctrines which disseminate doubt concerning Holy Scripture and the absolute authority of Him concerning Whom John Wesley in our Standards speaks thus in his 21st sermon:—

At the same time with what authority does He teach? Well might they say, "Not as the Scribes." Observe the manner (but it cannot be expressed in words), the air, with which He speaks! Not as Moses, the servant of God; not as Abraham, His friend; not any of the Prophets; nor as any of the sons of men. It is something more than human; more than can agree to any created being. It speaks the Creator of all! **A GOD. A GOD** appears! Yea, the **BEING OF BEINGS; JEHOVAH, THE SELF-EXISTENT, THE SUPREME; THE GOD, WHO IS OVER ALL, BLESSED FOR EVER!**

The man who teaches men to doubt the Bible and attribute error to Jesus Christ is not a Progressive. His proper name is Mr. Marching-Backwards. He is an Apostle of the doctrines of degeneration which have led Germany down into the abysses of barbarism, brutality, truce-breaking, and lying. Modernist theology is the highway to the land where the wild beasts of the desert lie, where their houses are full of doleful creatures, where owls dwell and satyrs dance, and the wild beasts of the islands cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces. The hope of the world's progress lies in the infinite expanses of God's Eternal Word. The Message of the true herald of Progress is : **BRING THE LAGGARD AGES UP TO THE BIBLE-STANDARD.**

JOHN WESLEY AND BIBLE-MENDERS.

It would be excusable if these menders of the Bible would offer their hypotheses modestly. But one cannot excuse when they not only obtrude their novel scheme with the utmost confidence, but even ridicule that Scriptural one which always was, and is now, held by men of the greatest learning and piety in the world. Hereby they promote the cause of infidelity more effectually than either Hume or Voltaire.—(*Wesley's Journal*, Sunday, Aug. 8th, 1773. Standard Edition, vol. v. p. 523.)

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A Very Urgent but Informal Word.

Many of the Activities of the Union have been increasingly hampered during the years of war : but in spite of all hindrances we are still enrolling new members, and I have just sent a considerable list of new subscribers to our publisher.

A Great Many of our Friends have sent some surplus amount, over and above the annual subscription, and several have sent larger and special donations. Without these it would be impossible to carry on the work of the Union at all, and we are greatly indebted to our friends. But for the past year these amounts have far from sufficed to cover the cost of our work.

Two Things would Greatly Help us :—

1. The payment by very many of our subscribers of their Subscription for the current year, 1918.

2. Special donations for the aggressive work of the Union.

We Believe that a Great Opening lies before us at the present time. We see the possibility of a special appeal which we are strongly advised ought to be made, and which may prove effectual in saving many from the prevailing Rationalism. It would be unwise to indicate just now the nature of this appeal : but before we could undertake it, the General Funds at our disposal would need to be increased by £200.

Some of our Readers may be Able to Help in this direction, and our appeal is this :—That all our readers specially lay the work of the Wesley Bible Union before God in prayer ; and that those whom God prompts so to do, should assist the work with special gifts of money—sent to

REV. H. C. MORTON, B.A.,

Hon. Secretary, W.B.U.,

8 Granville Road,

Hove, Brighton.

Obscurantism.

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

Obscurantism is a term that denotes 'that system of Thought, or No-Thought (whichever you may please to call it) that desires to maintain some pleasant creed (or rather make-belief) by *obscuring* its defects, either by a cunningly-devised statement of the said make-belief or by concealing the arguments against it.

Obscurantism may be the result of self-deception on the part of the Obscurantist, or it may be the deliberate attempt to hide the truth on the part of one who knows that he is seeking from unworthy motives to maintain a thing which he knows to be error.

Of course, if the Obscurantist is one of the latter class he is an extremely wicked man, a poisoner of men's souls, like Pope Leo X (Giovanni dei Medici) who was accustomed to say "What a profitable affair this fable of Christ has been to us!" To this class of soul-murderers belong all those who by the practice of reserve, or by wilful prevarication, intentionally practise upon the ignorance or credulity of other men by disseminating doctrines which they believe to be false. The Bible brands such makers of lies with appropriate epithets of opprobrium or condemnation. Of such it says: "*Let him be accursed.*" "*Hypocrites.*" "*Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.*" "*Blind guides.*" "*Fools and blind.*" "*Whited sepulchres.*" "*Serpents, generation of vipers.*" "*False teachers who privily bring in destructive heresies.*" "*Those who creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.*" "*Evil men and seducers, deceiving and being deceived.*" "*Many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*" (Gal. 1⁹; Matt. 23; 2 Pet. 2¹; 2 Tim. 3; 2 John).

Those who are conscious deliberate Obscurantists are villains of the deepest dye, and it is impossible to find language strong enough adequately to describe the heinousness of their crime. Their offence is viler than that of a poisoner of men's bodies, for the dissemination of intellectual and moral error is a far greater evil than the spreading of the contagion of physical disease. In the degree in which the soul excels the body in value injuries done to men in the spirit-realm exceed those of the physical sphere. Upon the same principle expressed by our Lord in those words, "*Ye are of more value than many sparrows,*" we must say that the murder of souls far exceeds in wickedness the murder of bodies. Open-eyed Obscurantism, such as that of wicked Popes, Cardinals, and Priests, is to be classed with the vilest of crimes.

But it is easy for men to drift unconsciously into the practice of Obscurantism scarcely knowing that they are doing it. The sources of such a line of conduct are manifold, Indolence is a prolific source of Obscurantism of this type. Men have been trained to believe certain doctrines the atmosphere of which pervades the circle into which they were born. The belief of those doctrines is comfortable, and often profitable. Controversy concerning them disagreeably disturbs their soul-slumber, and so they try by all kinds of subterfuges to avoid inquiry, often satisfying themselves with the argument that they cannot be wrong in accepting for true what so many great and wise men have believed and taught. Such was the Obscurantism of Saul of Tarsus in the days when he thought that he was doing God service in the persecution of the Christians. All along the ages there have been multitudes who have fallen into the error of Obscurantism through their devotion to ancestral beliefs. Some are moved to the practice of Obscurantism by baser motives than these. They continue to profess to believe and teach doctrines which they have abandoned in their own hearts, in order that they may receive the emoluments attached to offices which can only be held by those who profess to hold the doctrines in question. Of course, if these men do this with deliberate consciousness, they are criminals of the lowest grade, for there is no worse sin than that of men who barter the truth for the greed of gain. But at this point I have not in mind those wretches who are deliberate hucksters of souls, but I am thinking of men who silence the questionings of an inquiring soul by means of plausible opiates by means of which they persuade themselves that they are doing service both to God and man by retaining their association with the organization from the doctrines of which in their inmost heart they have fallen into this belief.

There are other Obscurantists who are such from cowardly dread of controversy, from shrinking from uncomfortable light, and from the revolutionary convulsions which necessarily follow the adoption of new creeds:

I am quite aware that there are many who will say as they read this: "The writer is well-describing himself. He is trying to hide from himself and others the discoveries of modern Biblical research, which unquestionably make it impossible for any man of education to hold the old doctrines

concerning the infallibility and final and absolute authority of Holy Scripture." I am quite aware that men of the Modernist school are many of them very ready to dub their opponents Obscurantists. I know that it is generally the fashion of arrogant Impudence, when it finds itself devoid of argument to follow the advice given by some unscrupulous lawyers to their pupils when training them for the bar: "**When you have no case, bully your opponent.**" I am quite aware that many regard me as one of the stupidest of Obscurantists. They describe me as being blindly opposed to all Biblical criticism, and think that if I would only acquaint myself with the assured results of the "Higher Criticism" (so misnamed), I could no longer maintain that all the teachings of the Bible are binding upon the intellect, the conscience and the conduct of mankind.

I wish here to say that no man is more eager than myself to know all the facts and truth that modern research has put within the reach of the Bible student. I advocate the most microscopic critical examination of every book, of every grammatical construction, of every phrase, of every word in the Holy Book. My conviction that it is the very Word of God makes its every jot and tittle precious to me, and makes me realize that it is a Christian's **DUTY** to avail himself of all knowledge that will bring him to a more perfect and intelligent apprehension of the exact meaning of the sacred book. For this reason I deplore the intention of the Conference to provide for the exemption of some of our theological students from the study of Hebrew and Greek. I think it is of great importance that every minister of religion should, if possible, possess a working knowledge of the original languages of Holy Writ, so that he may be able to read with intelligence great commentaries such as those of Bengel, Lightfoot, Ellicott, Westcott, and Swete that are based directly on the original text.

The Bible doctrine of the revelation of God is wonderfully illuminated by the discoveries of modern science. What a new meaning there is in that word "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork," for the man who knows the discoveries of modern astronomy with its revelations concerning the untold millions of suns that people the expanses of space, with all the amazing disclosures of spectroscopic astronomy, with its revelation of

the way in which sun-storms send a thrill throughout the solar system, and the like ! True science is the mother of deeper and more spiritual worship and pours floods of light upon Biblical exposition.

Similarly the new discoveries concerning the true nature of Biblical Greek are of great value. I rejoice very much concerning the demonstration of a truth which I myself have always held since I became a competent scholar in New Testament Greek. The recent researches concerning the *Koiné* dialect, in which the Septuagint and Greek Testament are written, shew, as I have believed from my early manhood, that the true exposition of the Greek Testament has been greatly marred by a too rigid adherence to the rules of Classical Greek. In this respect I would commend to Biblical students the wealth of illumination contained in James Hope Moulton's *Prolegomena of New Testament Greek, vol. I.* I am delighted to hear that a posthumous vol. II. is likely soon to appear. I hope this rumour is correct. I look for a wonderful advance in the exact exposition of the Bible to arise out of the new knowledge concerning this *Koiné* dialect which modern critical research is making available for us. In saying this, I do not mean to hint that I think any change of doctrine will result from such improvement in the critical understanding of Biblical Greek, except that I find that every advance in the real knowledge of the language of the inspired word increases the demonstration that it carries in itself the proofs that it is indeed **GOD-BREATHED.**

While speaking in terms of high admiration of Dr. James Moulton's book, which is, indeed, a wonderfully brilliant piece of linguistic study, I cannot refrain from saying that it is sorely marred by the characteristic defects of the author, amongst which I will specify three, viz., an undue disposition to generalize from particulars, a burning passion for novelties, and a disposition to jump to hasty conclusions.

Obscurantism is very prevalent in the ranks of the Modernists. Indeed I have no hesitation in affirming that **the system of religious thought commonly known under the name of Modernism in its various schools, such as the Apehood Theology of the Evolutionists, the Etymological Theology of the Philologists, the Guess-Theology of the so-called Higher Critics,**

the Egotist Theology of those who make the subjectivities of Personal Experience the sole touchstone of theological truth, not only numbers many Obscurantists amongst its dupes and devotees, but is itself thoroughly Obscurantist in its fundamental essence.

It substitutes for the facts ascertained by actual research the theories of *Mr. Man's Invention*, and bases everything upon a foundation of pure hypothesis. Many of the books proceeding from this school of thought impudently assume as "assured results" what are only the speculative guesses of man, guesses that are supported by no vestige of actual fact. I do not intend to attribute the crime of wilful and deliberate obscuration of truth to all the promulgators of Modernism. By no means. Probably the majority of them are rather the dupes of men in whose learning they have confidence. The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul has given us a vivid portraiture of the Modernists in 2 Tim. iii.-iv. 4, and it is often difficult to discriminate those who are the deceivers from those who are the deceived. Not infrequently the two elements are subtly intermingled in the same persons. The influences at work blinding men to the realities of the truth are manifold and complex. They are such as the following :—A desire to hide unpopular doctrines of revelation such as that of Eternal Punishment, in order to gain the adhesion of the multitudes to the church ; the attempt to popularize Christianity by concessions to the spirit of worldliness ; a desire to stand well in University circles ; the pride of the human heart which revolts against the doctrine of Original Sin ; the temptation to lower the standard of the Christian message so as to secure for the church persons of wealth and social influence who are unwilling to comply with the requirements of Bible religion ; the influence of the tremendous prevalence of fiction-literature which is blinding men's eyes to the vital difference between facts and man's inventions ; the prevalence of a monstrous exaggeration of the democratic ideal based upon the blasphemous maxim, *the voice of the People is the Voice of God* : a soft mawkish sentimentality, bred by goody-goody novels, that represents love as a jelly-fish emotion indifferent to moral distinctions, incapable of indignation, dwelling in the Centre of Indifference, that says concerning all creeds, and all moral conduct, "*It doesn't matter—Love is always tolerant ;*" a bluntness concerning

the supreme value of righteousness which obscures the fact that love of the Right is always inseparable from hatred of sin ; a one-sided ill-balanced view of things that makes individual experience the final court of appeal in relation to the True and the False, the Right and the Wrong, producing an Egotism that is the climax of the purpose of Satan who deceived Eve by leading her to set up her own judgment in defiance of the judgment of God, and whose plan is to bring into being an Antichrist the supreme characteristic of whom is to be this that he shall be "the man of sin, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. 2^{3,4}). This last-named brings us to the final and ultimate form of the antichristian apostasy in which the smoke of the pit most effectively clouds the mind of man so as to hide from him the light of the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ. I frequently have had this appeal made to me : "I never knew what real peace was until I found it in the acceptance of the Modernist view of the Scriptures ; I never knew the preciousness of Jesus Christ until I realized that He became flesh so entirely as to be subject to the errors of His age and nation ; surely you will admit that doctrines that have brought me such a wealth of Experience must be true." My reply is always this : "Oh no, the joy of self-sufficiency is a Satanic joy that is the very antipodes of the Peace of God. There is a smug self-complacency that affords great satisfaction to the man or woman who has persuaded himself or herself that his or her own judgments are final and infallible. Mr. Bunyan, the profoundest expert in the anatomy of human nature that the world has yet produced, has introduced us to Mr. Falsepeace who stoutly maintained that his proper name was Peace. He has told us who were the father and mother of Falsepeace viz., Mr. Flatter and Mrs. Soothup. The most hopeless of all conditions of iniquity is that of the man who is in the grip of the devil in the garb of an angel of light. If the devil can lead men along the paths of antichrist by means of a persuasion that the peace of self-complacency is the peace of God, it is an almost hopeless task to bring such a one to the conviction of sin. Spiritual pride is the forerunner of the unpardonable sin, if, indeed, it does not really constitute that sin. The

only Peace that is Peace indeed is the Peace that is founded on the bed-rock of the Revelation of God. The Peace that is based upon Self is the most aggravated form of the disease of Obscurantism."

Methodist Union and the Question of Doctrine.—(*Continued.*)

REV. HAROLD C. MORTON, B.A.

A Correspondent asks me: What are the Wesleyan Methodist Standards of Doctrine? He has never seen them and has no idea what they are. He therefore asks me to quote them! Most of my readers will be aware that the Wesleyan Standards are the 44 Sermons and the Notes on the New Testament, "commonly reputed to be by John Wesley." They form two moderate-sized volumes, and within such wide limits of space it is possible to state clearly and fully the doctrines which God originally committed to Methodism's care. The much briefer theological statements of the more recent Methodist Churches lack this great advantage. Their extreme brevity militates against that clearness and exactitude which are so much to be desired. In the Wesleyan Standards doctrines are stated in explicit and generally Scriptural language; their bearings upon life and experience are made plain; and thus the real meaning of the doctrines in question is more and more fully made clear to the reader. It is not easy to summarise in a few words the teachings of such Standards just because a few words are practically incapable of adequately stating any doctrine; and for this among other reasons I should be very reluctant to exchange Standards like ours for the brief statements of the other Methodist Churches.

Many doctrines are to be found in all three doctrinal statements; for example, the Divinity or Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, Justification by Faith, Conscious Salvation, and the Resurrection of the Dead; and to-day many people will at once declare that this is enough and there is essential unity among all Methodists. That there should be a large measure of unity is, of course, inevitable. Indeed there probably never has been a time when there was not a large

measure of unity between all branches whatsoever of the Christian Faith in all lands. What so many are slow to perceive is that side by side with these agreements there are often differences which of necessity modify and may even abrogate the points of agreement. I fear this is so in considerable measure as between the three great Methodist Churches ; and the doctrines of Scripture, of Human Nature, and of Human Destiny are the points where differences are perhaps most evident.

The fundamental doctrine of the Christian Faith is that Holy Scripture is the unerring Word of God. All other doctrines come to us on the authority of those Scriptures. Doubt of the authority of Scripture strikes at all certitude regarding doctrine. If the Scriptures lose, in the minds of men, their trustworthiness, then, in the minds of men, every Christian doctrine is shaken. Doubt of the Scriptures is the universal solvent of religious belief.

The Primitive Methodist Statement makes no reference to Scripture at all. It has no doctrine concerning the Bible. The Bible has been the battle-ground between belief and unbelief, first of all outside and more latterly inside the Churches, for a century gone by. The theories about the Bible are endless ; many of them entirely subvert the trustworthiness and therefore the authority of the Book ; and to have no doctrine of Scripture manifestly leaves the way open for all manner of subversive theories to be held. No authoritative doctrine means plainly that the field is open to any innovator, and in a day like this it is as certain as the sunrise that the innovator *will* enter by that open door.

And when we turn to the Statement concerning the Scriptures in the formularies of the United Methodist Church, the position is very little, if at all, bettered. This Statement is as follows :—

“The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, through Divine Inspiration, contain a revelation of the will of God to man, and furnish a sufficient rule of faith and practice.”

At first sight it appears to very many that the Statement that the Scriptures “contain a revelation” is not such as to deserve criticism. They say that the Scriptures contain the record of the words and deeds of men and of the angels of God, and even of the Devil and of his angels, as well as of the words and works of God. That is, of course, quite true :

but the essential fact to be remembered is this—that the Bible records all these words and deeds of human beings and of good and evil personalities in the very texture of a revelation of God's dealings with one and all of them. Taken by themselves and out of their context, the words and deeds of the evil-minded Jews who opposed our Lord or the words and deeds of him whom our Lord declared to be their father, viz., the Devil, are not the Word of God. But taken *in* their context all these words and deeds are a part, and an inalienable part, of the Revelation of God's Truth, God's Laws, God's Ways and Dealings and Judgments which in its entirety we call Holy Scripture. The whole Bible constitutes, without omission, the Revelation of God to human kind.

But that is not by any means all that requires to be said about the United Methodist doctrine of Scripture. I pass over, for the moment at least, the use of the indefinite article—"contain *a* revelation of the will of God"—as though there were other revelations deserving to be named by its side. Not to dwell upon that, the phrase "*contain* a revelation" is one which, to every observer of modern theological thought, has a plain inevitable meaning. The meaning given above—viz., that there are other words and deeds recorded in the Bible, plainly ascribed to men or devils, and that only part of the record contains the actual words and works of God—is not the meaning which this phrase, "contain a revelation," carries with it in current theological speech. The phrase is one which has come to be a lamentably plain "mark of the beast" in current theology. It means that among the teachings and messages of the Bible—the messages of the prophets and of the Psalmists, and the laws of the law givers, which the Bible ascribes not to men but to God—some are false, and some are true; some are a part of God's revelation, and some are not a part of God's revelation; and between these different parts we ourselves must discriminate. It means that some of the words of St. Paul are true and part of the Revelation of God; but on the other hand part of his words are mistaken—*e.g.*, his quotations from the Old Testament, "without either mental or moral value"—and therefore not part of the Revelation of God. It means even that our Lord's own words are part of them spoken from God, and therefore a part of God's Revelation, but part of them the expression of Jewish

thought which He had not outgrown, and therefore not a part of God's Revelation. Between these portions of Scripture we ourselves have to distinguish. We have to pick out from the very confused mixture of God's truth and man's error, what is true and what is false. I shrink even from the expression of this terrible idea regarding the Bible. It borders on, and I fear actually oversteps, the line which marks off mere error from blasphemy. I fear this is to be put down as one of those "doctrines of devils" against which the Word of God warns us. The devil has appeared to many as an angel of light. But it is important for all to understand what is commonly meant to-day by the statement that "the Scriptures *contain* a Revelation of the will of God." It means that many parts of the Bible, professing to come from God, do not really come from Him; and we men and women of to-day have to pick out from the Scriptures what is indeed a veritable Revelation of God.

Who is sufficient for these things? Individual judgment varies enormously. There is no consensus of Christian judgment as to what parts of the Bible are to be received as from God. Even if there were, it might not help us greatly. The world by its wisdom knows not God. Of many teachings, all professing to come from God, man's wisdom is not able to pick out what does really come from Him, and what does not. Already the selection varies enormously. If the fantastic idea were to become the accepted rule for dealing with the Scriptures, the variations would grow in number and in scale. The Christian faith would not only be dissolved in unbelief; but the tragedy would speedily degenerate into farce, and an observant world would be dissolved in laughter. Christian teachings would become a tangle of contradictions, and provoke only the levity of mankind.

Can we Wesleyans accept such a statement as United Methodism offers us? Or will those who believe that this statement is the truth be willing to accept instead our own great claims for the inerrancy and authority of the whole Scripture? Or could we agree to have no doctrine of Scripture, like the Primitive Methodist Church? Or will they be willing to accept our Standards again, though for reasons, which presumably seemed good to them, the human founders of that Church rejected the Standards of the Church from which they sprang? To my mind no one of these alterna-

tives is in any great degree probable. That either the Primitive Methodist Church or the United Methodist Church will accept our Standards is in the highest degree improbable; and though it is far more likely that the Wesleyan Church, eaten through and through with rationalism, will accept such a statement as the United Methodist Church provides, that is in the highest degree undesirable and unjustifiable. Have those who are urging Methodist union considered what is involved as regards the doctrine of Scripture? A smaller Church which holds the truth is of more service to God than a large Church which has compromised with error.

Human nature and human destiny, as they figure in the doctrinal statements, are the next points deserving notice; and I hope to say something on these great questions in our November issue.

Did Abraham ever Exist?

REV. SHERWIN SMITH, M.A., B.D.

It is very foolish of some Wesleyan Ministers and Tutors to suggest the possibility that Abraham never existed. For if there is a man whose existence is absolutely certain, that man is Abraham. He was the father of Isaac, who was the father of Jacob, who was the father of the twelve patriarchs, from whom the tribes of Israel came, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh. They had to have fathers, and Abraham is the father of God's people. The only answer is that though Abraham never existed, another man called Abraham did, who is the father of them all. These are the absurdities to which criticism is reduced.

But why doubt his existence at all? It has become the fashion to say that the account of Abraham is ideal, vague, shadowy, like the accounts of the ancestors of other peoples, such as Romulus of the Romans, and Teucer of the Greeks. Romulus and Teucer are vague, but Abraham is not. He is perfectly recognisable. Almost his features are, and certainly his prayers are. A man is known by his prayers, and nothing so substantiates the historical accuracy of the whole Bible, as the different prayers of the different people. They belong

absolutely to the men who prayed them. A tramp once came begging to a Cumberland farmer, and in the course of his pitiful story the tramp said, "I am a Wesleyan Local Preacher." The farmer said, "Down on your knees then and pray before me, or else I'll set the dogs on you. If you are a Local Preacher, I'll know you by your prayers." Needless to say, the man hurried off before the farmer could get to his dogs. I don't believe that the prayers of the Bible are forgeries. I don't believe that forgers can forge such prayers.

But there are other distinct traits about Abraham. Ideal, vague, dreamy accounts of men magnify their military prowess. Abraham could have been magnified as such, but the least known chapter of his life is his military exploit. His faults are there, and they are not very pleasant ones, especially in relation to his wife. Then Circumcision is an Eastern rite and is not limited to the Jewish people, but its religious significance is limited to the Jews, and there is no explanation of that intense religious significance apart from God's covenant with Abraham.

Human sacrifices were a part of all the religions around, but they never were of the Jewish religion, although that religion was to culminate in the sacrifice of God's own Son. The explanation of the abhorrence of human sacrifice, and yet of the feeling for the necessity of some such sacrifice is God's dealings with Abraham over his son Isaac. Whichever way you look, there are the monuments of Abraham—the very existence of the chosen people, his definite character as a prayerful, meek, and believing man, circumcision, the abolition of dreaded human sacrifice.

There is another monument lurking in the Hebrew language itself. The Koran has a beautiful story about Abraham. "When he saw a star rise, he said: This is my Lord. But when it set, he said, I like not those that set. And when the moon rose, he said, This is my Lord; it is brighter than the stars. But when it set, he said, Verily, if the Lord direct not my way aright, I shall be as one of those that err. Then the sun rose, brighter than they all, and he said, This is my Lord. But when it too set, he said, O my people, I am clear of these things. I turn my face to Him who hath made heaven and earth." This story illustrates what is true of Abraham, that he turned from all the manifestations of God, which might become and did become

idols, to the One True God. The Hebrew word for God is ELOHIM, a plural word, which might so easily take a plural verb, but does not. It is a plural noun with a singular verb. All sorts of deep meanings lurk in that grammatical solecism. It is a premonition of the Trinity. It is also the answer to idolatry. Abraham, as the first great Hebrew seer, passed on to his descendants this bit of grammar of the Holy Ghost—Persons and Manifestations in the Deity, but only one Nature and Action. Abraham has left his mark in the doctrine of the Godhead.

This will explain what is a very notable fact of Scripture, that almost the most common human description of God is the God of Abraham. He is the God of Abraham to Isaac. He is the God of Abraham to Jacob. God Himself said to Moses, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Even when Elijah stood upon Mount Carmel, he cried aloud and said, O Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Israel. If there is no Abraham, there is certainly no God of Abraham. People who give up Abraham must find another God; for the God whom the Christians worship is not a God they have found out for themselves, but a God who has declared Himself by revelation, and He has called Himself the God of Abraham. Now are we going to reduce God to foolishness? and are we going to reduce our Lord Jesus Christ to foolishness, too? For He argues that because God said, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, therefore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were living at the very hour when God said those words to Moses; for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. But how could they be living at that very hour if they never existed? Rev. F. L. Wiseman writes in *The Chief Corner-Stone* (p. 279):—"Presuming that it were conclusively proved that the great figure standing at the head of the Hebrew nation is mythical—a supposition requiring, for acceptance, far more confirmation than it enjoys at present—one's profit in reading and confidence in expounding the lovely story is not lessened. Abraham will still be the father of the faithful, &c." How can a man be the father of the faithful, who never existed, and what profit is there in such a story? God and Christ have both affirmed the existence of Abraham. Why should Mr. Wiseman or anyone else affirm otherwise? It is these unthinking yieldings on the part of our

leaders which ruin us. Rev. George Jackson set the pace in *Studies in the Old Testament* (p. 47), when he said that though Noah and Abraham and Jonah are spoken of as actual historical characters in the New Testament by our Lord Himself, yet if criticism denied or questioned the fact, we could not put the authority of Christ over against criticism. Criticism is more than our Lord and more than God Himself; or, as George Jackson puts it, "a man may not do violence to his intellectual conscience at the bidding of any authority, however august."

The existence of Abraham is so important, and so bound up with the existence of our Covenant and so linked with Jehovah, the God of our Covenant, that, when Jesus began to think and speak of Abraham, He relapsed into the language of Jehovah and said, "Before Abraham was I am." "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." There is no meaning in these sayings, there is no confidence in Jesus, if Abraham never existed.

Abraham fills up a great part in the Gospel of St. Paul. Abraham's faith is the model faith of the believer.

"And in the steps of Abraham's faith
Enable me to go."

Not the description of his faith, not some faked-up stories of someone's faith who never existed, but the actual faith of the man who believed God could give him a son Isaac when they were past age, and who believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead if he sacrificed him—this is the model faith of the believer in Jesus, Who was brought again from the dead. It was counted to Abraham for righteousness, and it is counted to us for righteousness.

All this means that Abraham is no mere name in the Bible to conjure with, or the title of a movement, but that he is an actual living breathing man, whose very existence and the acts of whose life are made use of both by God and Christ and St. Paul for the saving of the race.

If we believe in Jesus, we must believe in what Jesus believed in. It must be a pure delight to us to follow the Truth in all His ways. This criticism is only a new device for turning the edge of Christ's authority. They objected to His authority when He lived. Whence had He this authority? Why should they submit absolutely to Him? He said, "Search the Scriptures, believe them, and ye will believe Me.

But if ye believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye be persuaded though one rise from the dead." This intellectual conscience of which people speak to-day is only another way of questioning the authority of Christ. Why should we submit our intellects to Him? Why if He speaks about the Old Testament and its men should we believe Him? If we resist His authority over the Old Testament, we shall resist it everywhere. If we believe not in the existence of Abraham, the time will come when we shall not believe in the existence of Jesus.

Notes.

The Flowing Tide of Victories.

With profound thanksgiving to Almighty God we note the universality of the victories which, as we write, are crowning the Allied standards. The fact that it is not in one field only, but in all fields of battle from Eastern Siberia to France and Flanders that the enemy is checked and held; and that on all fields save one, viz., the Italian front, the enemy is meeting with crushing defeat—this fact seems to suggest that God in His goodness is now giving the decisive victory for which we have so long prayed. The tide seems to have turned. Prayer has been answered. Marshal Foch is reported to be a profoundly religious man, who often goes into churches for periods of quiet prayer; and it is reported also that "nothing gave him greater pleasure than the message sent him on July 18th, the day the Allied offensive began, from the Wesleyan Conference, telling him that they were praying for him." Prayer has been answered. The small bands of tireless intercessors, who during all these four years of war have met in so many places almost daily for War Intercession, will be full of thanksgiving to-day. God has certainly answered our prayers and seems to be now giving the decisive victory.

"The Goodness of God Leadeth them to Repentance."

It seems to be the universal admission that all the calamity of this war—its cost in life, in heart-break, in money and so much else, has not led the nation to repentance. Surely Isaiah would have been given to cry out to-day, were he living now: "Yet the people hath not turned unto Him that smote them, neither have they sought the Lord of Hosts" (ix. 13). What now? Judgments have not led us to repentance. Will God's goodness lead us thither? O that this nation, realizing how great are His mercies, would bring forth fruits meet for repentance! And such fruits surely are—the prohibition of the Drink Trade, the resolute banishment from our streets of solicitation and all forms of trade in vice, and the enforcement of the laws which guard for the whole people the Lord's Day as a day of rest. If Parliament set the example and the public authorities of our towns followed suit in these three great matters, then we could feel comforted. For these three long-needed reforms would be signs that the nation really believes in God and desires to obey Him.

If God's Goodness does not move us, What then?

There is no position either in personal or national affairs in which the Bible does not give us light and guidance. If a nation is not moved to repentance by God's judgments, or His goodness, then the prophecies of Isaiah, recorded in chapters 9 and 10, show us what we are to expect. He there depicts a long series of disasters as coming upon God's chosen nation, one following another, because the preceding one failed to subdue the people's rebellious heart. The judgment is depicted; the prophet has to declare that it has not turned the people to God; therefore he cries out, "For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still"; and he proceeds to depict another judgment falling on the disobedient nation. Finally, he depicts the sending forth of the dreaded Assyrian against a profane and disobedient people: and the only hope held out of deliverance from the Assyrian is this: "When the Lord hath performed *His whole work* upon Mount Zion and upon Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks."

First, God's purposes of reformation fulfilled in Judæa, and then Judæa delivered from her disasters! Is not the application plain? It seems likely that the awful scourge of war is about to pass away. But will that mean the end of our troubles? If we cling obstinately to our sins—if we cling to the Drink Trade and nationalize it instead of destroying it; if we continue to make excuses for vice, and suffer the flaunting street evil still to go unchecked; if we still fail to enforce the laws which our more religious forefathers put on the Statute Book to guard the Day of Rest, or fail to replace them with something better—then there are more calamities in store!

Every intelligent mind, looking at English life to-day, can see forces at work which might easily bring the land to disaster. Economic crises and crashes; industrial struggles and tidal waves of anarchy; Bolshevism and its hell-fire creed of class hatred—any one of these is possible enough in the years after the war; and one or more of them are fairly certain for a nation of whom it has to be said:—

"Yet the people hath not turned to Him
that smote them, neither have they
sought the Lord of Hosts."

Will God Bless a Land that Cherishes Sacerdotalism?

We have mentioned—as sins that need to be repented of—the Drink Trade, street vice, and Sabbath desecration. But ought we not at least to add the sin of this professedly Protestant nation in not merely tolerating, but in cherishing sacerdotalism? Papal Rome has shown herself in this great world crisis as the determined enemy of free Protestant England, and the timid sympathizer with Prussian aggression and tyranny. This fact alone should lead to the purging from our national Church of all those who are fighting Rome's battles and taking Protestant moneys to do the work of the Pope. When shall we see England arousing herself to end this sin and shame in the Established Church? Sir William Harcourt's voice was the last powerful voice raised in Parliament—but it is 20 years ago that he vehemently called for the expulsion of Romanisers, and declared that the needful watchword was not "No Popery," but "No Treachery." All honour to those who have fought a splendid fight for these past 20 years. But because they fight so far in vain, England may look for disasters.

Moreover, she will owe those disasters not only to the weakness of the Establishment, but also to the weakness of the Free Churches. How many Nonconformists have miserably failed to fight the fight both in Parliament and outside it? And now to-day a band of Nonconformists—extreme

modernists, like the Rev. Dr. Orchard, among them—enter into special conference with Romanisers, to see if they do not agree upon fundamentals! But surely Sacerdotalism smashes into atoms some of the fundamentals of Scriptural Christianity. “O Union, what crimes and follies are committed in thy name!”

The President's Letter to the Synods.

Conference asked the President to send a letter to the Synods about the Spiritual Advance Movement and the recent “Report.” The President did so; but in some Synods scant time was devoted to it, and we fear the reason ultimately is that everyone realizes, though few candidly admit, the emptiness of the remedies generally proposed and the hollowness of the whole Spiritual Advance Movement.

Mr. Chadwick's letter has much that is good in it. Nothing from Mr. Chadwick's pen could fail to have good in it, and he probably performed the thankless task Conference allotted to him as well as any man could have done. He speaks of our *lack of passion, of vitality, virility and vision, and our dulness of experience, and our slackness of service, our indifference to evangelism*, and so forth. We believe all these things are true; but what puzzles us is that even Mr. Chadwick *does not attempt to find any explanation which accounts for all these evils*. Surely in our heart of hearts we all know in very great part the true explanation! We find it difficult to believe that Conference is really at a loss to know the cause of our decline. Without conviction there can be no passion, or vitality, or virility—and **how can there be conviction when the Bible is doubted?** Experience must needs be dull when men cannot trust God's Word; service must needs be slack when servants criticise their Master; evangelism must needs be feeble when the spiritual atmosphere is full of the poison-gas of Universalism.

The one thing which more than anything else explains our lowered condition is that Wesleyan Methodism has surrendered to higher criticism, and has taught her people to distrust the Bible. Mr. Chadwick says that the most striking feature of Conference was its resolute refusal to be discouraged. We think a more striking feature was Conference's continued unwillingness to admit the crucial fact of the situation.

The Appeal in the Conference for Abstinence from Controversy.

Our readers will remember that when the Report on Unity of Doctrine was discussed in the Conference, at the conclusion of the debate, when the Resolution for the re-appointment of the Committee was passed, an appeal was made that this should be a year when there should be a cessation from doctrinal controversy. Thereupon Rev. Harold C. Morton put a very pertinent question, “To whom is this appeal made?” The Ex-President, Rev. Simpson Johnson, who was occupying the Chair, replied: “*To you and your friends.*” Thereupon Mr. Morton said: “*The appeal should be made rather to those who are disturbing the Connexion with doctrines contrary to our Standards.*” It is remarkable that such a man as the Ex-President should shew his desire to silence the Wesley Bible Union, thus giving direct impetus to the wreckers of Methodist doctrine. The assumption is continually made that we of the W.B.U. are disturbers of the peace of the Connexion, while the real disturbers are those who are doing their utmost to destroy the Methodist doctrine. The injustice of this proposal for cessation from doctrinal controversy has been emphasized since Conference by the *Methodist Recorder*, in which a series of bitter letters proceeding from Methodist Modernists have been appearing in its correspondence columns. It may be said; This must not be taken as an indication that the *Recorder* wishes to

give its support to these views, but as an indication that the *Recorder* loves fair-play, and desires to give opportunity for various schools of thought to set forth their views. Some of us know, however, how the *Recorder* refuses to publish letters in defence of the doctrines of our Standards, and how it frequently edits those which it does publish, sometimes omitting the most effective sentence in the letter. It is unmistakable that the *Recorder* shews strong sympathy with doctrinal revolution.

The Attack in the "Methodist Recorder" on Rev. J. T. L. B. Westerdale.

Our readers are well aware of the brilliancy and courage of letters that Mr. Westerdale has been sending to the press against those who have disturbed the peace of Methodism by disseminating Modernist assaults on the Bible and on the authority of the teachings of our Blessed Lord and Master Jesus Christ. In the *Recorder* of Aug. 1st there was a letter from Rev. F. E. England, C.F., on Spiritual Advance that contained the following passage:—

There must be some fearless preaching, both destructive and constructive, but principally the latter. If we were unitedly to preach the truths of the Bible with all the enhanced meaning which the last century's thought and discovery have given them, people would come to hear us gladly. People to-day want to reconstruct their system of belief, to make it strong enough to stand the shock and strain of terrible calamity—and we are spending time in quarrelling about tools and methods. Men like the Rev. J. T. L. B. Westerdale, who imagine themselves champions of truth, in declaiming in your columns about the bane of Biblical criticism, etc., are doing an incalculable amount of harm by agitating and inflaming the minds of people who never heard of Wellhausen. Let it alone! Let every man speak the truth which he has discovered for himself, and allow some tolerance for others. For Truth will find its rightful place even as it did in Gamaliel's day. But let us, at all events, give a reasonable and decisive answer to the perplexities of our people.

In this way the *Recorder* assists in publishing matter calculated to support the advocacy of a reconstruction of Wesleyan Methodist theology, without any editorial caution or any other attempt to supply the antidote. It must not be said that it is unfair thus to criticize the procedure of the *Recorder* on the ground of a single letter in its correspondence column. It would be unfair, if this were a solitary instance; but all who read the *Recorder* are well aware that this letter is only a fair sample of much matter of the same kind frequently appearing in its columns, not only in correspondence, but in articles, notices of books, etc., etc., and of how seldom a word is introduced, especially in its editorial utterances, in maintenance of the characteristic tone of the theology of our Standards. But our point at present is this: *How does the publication of such letters as that of Mr. England harmonize with the appeal for abstinence from controversy?*

Mr. England again in the Recorder of August 22nd.

In the *Recorder* of August 22nd the following appears from the pen of Mr. England:—

In reply to that small part of Mr. Westerdale's letter which is relevant, may I say that the transparent fallacy in his position and that of the Rev. Harold Morton lies in their claim to possess the monopoly of truth. To understand their position one must start by accepting the view that they only (and members of their school) have perfectly understood Christ. But the fact is that *Christ is unsearchable*. His meaning has never yet been exhausted by the thought of any age. Therein lies one of the surest marks of His Divinity. In the fundamentals His Message is so clear that the fool may understand, but yet so sublime that even Mr. Morton could find some fresh aspect of truth to preach about Sunday by Sunday. No one can claim to have attained completely; there is no monopoly of truth. Mr. Westerdale

preaches from the angle at which he sees Christ (a very narrow and undefined view some of us think), and we preach Him from the point of view from which we have seen Him. There is no justification whatsoever for drawing a red-herring across the trail, and calling this either shoddy Modernism or Free-thought; still less for using the grotesque figure of an "old Roman mother dressed up in the latest flapper fineries." Nay, it is rather the old Methodist idea of "experience"—

"What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell."

We are bound to say that we cannot suppose that Mr. England really thinks that Messrs. Westerdale and Morton claim to possess the monopoly of truth. We think that this tone of arrogant assumption of superiority is rather to be found in Mr. England's letters. It is curious that we should be told that the school of thought that attributes error to Christ can claim for itself the proclamation of a larger message than the message of those who affirm that "all the fulness of the Godhead" is revealed in Christ, and that His words have in them all the infinities of God.

Favourable Reviews of Modernist Books in the "Recorder."

We cannot imagine any more insidious way of assaulting the faith than the commendation of heretical books in papers that are understood to stand for the orthodox faith. Methodist people who find books favourably reviewed in the *Recorder*, knowing that this paper is understood to be under the editorship of men who are pledged to maintain the doctrines of our Standards, will naturally infer that books that are praised in that journal without a single note of caution are quite safe. We are very much indebted to Rev. Sherwin Smith, M.A., B.D., for calling attention in the *Recorder* of August 29th to the Review of sundry books by Rev. W. F. Howard, M.A., B.D., in the *Recorder* of Aug. 22nd, in which Mr. Howard spoke in strong terms of commendation of a number of Modernist books, and in which he apparently declared his acceptance of the view of the Book of Jonah that denies its historicity, and in which he states that "the view of Deuteronomy held by Dr. George Adam Smith is accepted in its main outlines by the unanimous consensus of scholars." This article of Mr. Howard's is a fair specimen of the insolent tone commonly adopted by Modernists towards those who dare to question their hypothetical theories. Instead of deigning to reply to the arguments of those who reply to their criticisms, they are very fond of insulting them by saying: "This proves that you are not in the circle of scholars." Abuse of this kind is not argument, and is generally a proof that the man who uses this method in controversy takes refuge in it, because he feels himself unable to reply to the arguments of those whom he is assailing. But, again, we ask what becomes of the appeal to Mr. Morton and his friends to abstain from controversy during this year, when the columns of the *Methodist Recorder* are engaged in publishing matter in direct antagonism to the view of the Scriptures set forth in our Standards?

Rev. W. F. Howard Replies to Mr. Sherwin Smith.

Mr. Howard replies to Mr. Sherwin Smith in letters in the *Recorder* of Sept. 5th and 12th. Those replies contain the assumption that the so-called Higher Critical views of certain Old Testament books are demonstrated. The *Recorder* heads those two letters of Mr. Howard thus: "*The Ethics of Obscurantism*" and "*The Perils of Obscurantism*." These two titles assume that those who take the view of those books which is opposed to the views advocated by Mr. Howard are either deliberately or unconsciously obscuring the truth. We are inclined to raise the question whether the real charge of Obscurantism does not lie against the man who conceals the fact that the

views asserted by Mr. Howard to be accepted by the general consensus of Biblical scholars are antagonized by such authorities as Bishop Ellicott, Bishop Moule, John Urquhart, Harold Wiener, Professor James Orr, Dr. Thomas Whitelaw, Professor Edouard Naville, and many other scholars of the front rank whom we might name. Mr. Howard must know that he is concealing facts from his readers when he makes statements such as these with respect to the general consensus of Biblical scholars. In this respect he is only exhibiting the common ethics of the school to which he belongs, who alas! too frequently practise Obscurantism of the worst type. They write about "assured results" and the like in regard to matters concerning which they are well aware that there is no settlement whatever, and they delude those whom they mislead by hiding from them the fact that the questions of which they treat are still, even from the standpoint of criticism, open questions of discussion. We feel it our duty to raise our voice against the perils of Modernist Obscurantism, and to expose the Ethics of those who thus parody the facts of the case. When we say that the matters referred to are open questions of discussion we mean *only within the range of Biblical criticism taken by itself*. They are not open to discussion for us, because we consider that the *infallible inspiration* of Holy Scripture is *demonstrated on irrefutable evidence*.

To the Trustees of Methodism.

BRETHREN,—You are in a position of tremendous importance, and the time has come for your attention to be called to the fact.

Methodism was the gift of God to England and the world. The instrument in God's hands to establish it was John Wesley, who always spoke of it as "the work of God," and who recognised in it a reproduction of primitive Christianity.

It was John Wesley's desire to organise so that "the work of God" might be helped forward and consolidated, and history shews that both during Wesley's life, and for many years afterward, the patient, self-sacrificing services rendered by saved men, by the blessing of God resulted in the success of the work of saving others.

Troubles rose from time to time. One trouble, in which much property was lost to the "old body," resulted in the drawing up of a legal deed which would secure to the Connexion the chapels which might afterwards be built. This "Model Deed" vests each building in a board of Trustees. The method of carrying on the trust is fixed, and the purpose of each trust is to safeguard the use of the trust to the Conference, that men may be appointed to the use of such premises to preach and teach the doctrines embodied in

Wesley's Four Volumes of Sermons, and Notes on the New Testament.

The Deed makes the Superintendent of the Circuit the Chairman of the Trustees' Meeting, and gives him voting power as Chairman. That is, he is *pro. tem.* a trustee of every chapel in his Circuit. He can call meetings when he likes and preside. He is the auditor of the accounts, and is required to hold an annual meeting of Trustees.

But the Deed safeguards his co-Trustees from a misuse of his power. Any two of them may call a meeting of the Trustees when they think it necessary, and it is legal if they send a fourteen clear days' notice of the meeting, stating place, time and business of the meeting, providing the Superintendent is duly notified. If the Superintendent attends, he has a right to the chair, but if he does not attend, the Trustees present may elect one of their number as chairman and proceed to business.

Hitherto there has been such unanimity in the teaching of Methodist preachers that very seldom has anything occupied the attention of the Trustees but matters of finance and management of the premises themselves. Alas ! that a time has come when there is great need to call the attention of Trustees to their greater responsibilities.

A great apostasy has set in. Men are to-day tolerated in our Conference who openly attack the Bible, and are teaching doctrines concerning Christ which are contrary to the teaching of the Bible, and of Wesley. The teaching at our Institutions is on lines altogether subversive of Methodist teaching, and of the authority of Scripture.

The power of Conference is vested in 100 ministers called the Legal Hundred, and these men are tolerating, and some of them deliberately encouraging the spread of views which are distressing to the very men who have toiled and sacrificed to perpetuate the preaching of the saving doctrines of the Bible.

What can be done ? Something must be done.

Brethren, you are in trust of these buildings. You hold them for God and truth.

The Methodist Conference cannot rob you of the power placed upon you by the trust deeds.

You must know that the Model Deed gives no power to the Conference to appoint to the use of these buildings men

who preach doctrines contrary to those hitherto held.

We know the plea for advance, and the idea which prevails that we must progress in our doctrines.

There is always a possibility of false progress, as well as true.

If doctrine progresses rightly and safely, it will never be *contradictory* to that which has gone before. The N.T. follows, amplifies, presupposes, and explains the O.T., and there will be a development of truth in harmony with the old truths; the Scriptures will unfold themselves, but it is no part of the duty of a Methodist trustee to allow his chapel to be used by men, who undermine the authority of the Bible, speak derogatively of Jesus Christ, make light of sin, and redemption by Christ alone, and while denying saving truth substitute Churchiness and sacramentarian ideas, or else preach a new theology of man's innate goodness, and power of self-development in the way of salvation.

It remains now for Methodist trustees to see what they can do to save Methodism from collapse and apostasy. Better for Methodist property to lie idle than for it to be used to hasten apostasy of which Scripture speaks so definitely. We must contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. That faith is in the Scriptures of truth or nowhere. And it will be your solemn duty brethren not to allow any man to occupy the pulpit who goes beyond the Bible, or speaks of it in any way slightly or by way of disparagement.

You must help Conference to regain its fidelity of God's truth by keeping every false teacher out of your pulpits.

Acknowledgments.

The following sums, over and above the annual *Journal* Subscription, have been sent to us during the past month:—

				£	s.	d.					£	s.	d.	
Capt Boss ...	...	...	...	0	3	0	Mr. W. R. Nicholls ...	...	...	0	19	0		
Mr. Silvester ...	...	...	...	0	3	0	Ald. Bartle Rye, J.P. ...	...	...	0	9	0		
Mr. Bedwell ...	...	...	...	0	3	0	"Fair Play" ...	...	...	1	1	0		
Mr. Foster ...	...	...	...	0	3	0	Mr. R. Bassett ...	...	...	0	6	0		
Mr. Richardson ...	...	...	...	0	5	0	Mr. W. Walker ...	...	...	0	18	0		
Rev. F. Tunbridge ...	...	...	...	0	3	0	Mr. G. M. Haddock ...	...	...	0	6	0		
Rev. J. Griffiths ...	...	...	...	0	7	0	Mr. C. E. Hazell ...	...	...	0	3	0		
Mr. Rodda ...	...	...	...	0	2	0	Miss Williams ...	...	...	0	5	0		
Rev. H. C. Morton ...	...	...	...	3	0	0	Small sums ...	...	...	0	2	0		

Our thanks are presented to all our friends.

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The Professor and the Critics.

MR. FRED. J. BROOKE.

Concerning the miasma of Modernism which has spread, as all such influences do, to the weakening and undoing of its victims, and which in this case found its most suitable soil for development in the Theological Colleges of the various Churches, it is interesting to note some of the conditions now operative in and associated with these "seats of learning."

A number of these institutions are now closed or occupied and used by other authorities. In some cases they are in the possession of governmental departments which seek to defeat the Germany whose professors were, to a large extent, the propagandists who infused the teachings which have brought so great an undoing into the ministries of the various Churches.

The war itself, to a very large extent, owed its origin to the atmosphere created by Nietzsche and other disseminators of the Higher Criticism heresies, and the exigencies of the war have laid a specially heavy hand upon the haunts where these very teachings found soil in which to propagate. The toll of sorrow and suffering and ruin at which mankind

shudders, so far as these affect the wholesale slaughter and maiming of our brethren, and the devastation of vast tracts of fair country, is balanced in its agony and trouble in the sphere of Christian faith, where the ministry of the Churches is paralysed and the cry of the distressed heart "Who will show us any good?" in many cases finds no answer.

May we not seriously ask "Is not the present condition of the home colleges the direct nemesis of the unscriptural propaganda that was so popular an element in their curriculum?" Has God allowed this nemesis to come as a chastisement; if so, will the prophets learn righteousness and return to the simplicities and glory and certainties of the Gospel of the Grace of God?

Professor G. G. Findlay, B.A., D.D., who has been for many years Tutor in New Testament Languages and Literature and Classics at Headingley College, has, in a recent issue of the *London Quarterly*, an interesting and illuminating article on Paul's teaching on sin and salvation.

In estimating the significance of Dr. Findlay's onslaught, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that he himself has often been guilty of advocating teachings quite contrary to our doctrinal Standards. His essay in the pathetically heretical book, *The Corner Stone*, is a sad example of his departure from "Believing and preaching our doctrines." The value of the article is the greater because it reveals the fact that all is not concord in the critical school, that the divergencies in its ranks are wide, and that there is not much mutual reverence for each others' findings. Concerning ascertained results he writes :—

Since eighty years ago F. C. Baur first applied to this field his acute and luminous critical talent, every phrase of Paul's letters, every step of his travels, every trait of his personality has been microscopically scanned and discussed from almost every conceivable point of view. And yet we find at the end of it all a scholar like Schweitzer, the *enfant terrible* of contemporary German New Testament criticism, summing up the labours of his predecessors thus : "The study of Paulinism has nothing very brilliant to show for itself in the way of scientific achievement. Learning has been lavishly expended upon it, but thought and reflexion have been to seek." On the ground he has cleared, Schweitzer lays the foundations of a more "scientific" construction of his own, which promises, however, to be even less adequate and convincing than some of those on which he pours his scorn.

Of the theorists endless variety of results and their uncertainties he declares :—

There is little approach to agreement in the combinations devised; every fresh investigator arrives at a new, or greatly modified, formula.

The impressions made on enquiring minds by the critical literature devoted to Paul, and its failure to find any worthy solution for its questions, he refers to thus :—

Criticism works about its great problem with wonderful patience, industry, skill, and breadth of discursive thought ! it fails to get inside !

The destructive process he declares to be “about sufficiently done,” and that the time has come for building :—

We are ready to accept on due examination the discoveries, real and manifold, which modern scientific research into the New Testament times has made. St. Paul and his Divine Master belonged to the first century of the Christian age as truly as we to the nineteenth or twentieth; they breathed its atmosphere, wore its dress, imbibed its ideas whether to retain or repudiate them, and addressed themselves effectively to its mind. All this, and the bearings and the consequences of all this, so imperfectly realized by our fathers, the historical critics are teaching us to understand; but they have extravagantly magnified their office and presumed beyond their limit.

Most loyal students of Paul's life and teaching will agree with Professor Findlay in the following stricture :—

The historical elements and circumstances are the “three measures of meal” of the parable. There is “hidden” something more, the synthesizing and transmuting force, which imparts a new being to the otherwise inert mass—what the Apostle calls “the Spirit which giveth life.” It is just this one thing needful, the “leaven” within the lump, that the critics in their careful sifting of the “three measures” are apt to miss.

We wonder what some of the critical school will think when they read the following trouncing of the cock-suredness so frequently found in the semi-informed men who flout the sober convictions of older and more truly balanced students of the Divine Word :—

One is indignant at the levity with which modern upstarts convict this mighty thinker of ineptitude. When Wernle, for example, in his clever but often arbitrary and imaginative book on *The Beginnings of Christianity*, after reviewing Romans ix.-xi., exclaims, “What a fluctuating medley of thought about God!” The sentence has an imposing sound; the writer stands surely on a lofty height who can look down on the Apostle in that way: it would become him rather to suspect a muddle in his own mind.

It is refreshing to have from the pen of Professor Findlay these pungent sentences in defence of truths which are in part the bedrock foundations on which Wesleyan Methodism is built, which have never ceased to be included in her “Stan-

dards of Doctrine," and his belief in which every preacher, "Itinerant" and "Local," has solemnly affirmed.

Warnings from one who has himself travelled so far along the Modernist track is indeed suggestive, and is symptomatic of an unrest that is greatly at variance with the boasted confidence manifested by some of its devotees. Notwithstanding constantly recurring evidence that their premises are vitiated by new light, there is still an active spreading of the Modernist miasma in forms both subtle and desolating.

For the defence of Divine Truth the Wesley Bible Union was founded, and for this it is Divinely called to stand fast.

Obscurantism.

REV. G. ARMSTRONG BENNETTS, B.A.

In the last number of this *Journal* I dealt in a general way with the subject of Obscurantism, shewing that it is a term dealing with a great evil, which, when deliberate, is not only an evil but a sin of an extremely heinous kind, seeing that it is a term expressing the practice of methods for obscuring the truth. In this article I propose to present our readers with the portraits of some Obscurantists who are to be found in the ranks of Modernist Gnostics. The true "Gnostic" is a name that was claimed for themselves in the early days of Christianity by some people who professed that they possessed such superior knowledge that they could not believe in the orthodox presentation of Christian truth, and so they called themselves "Gnostics," which is Greek for "Know-All." Well did Joseph Parker say: "*The Devil has no new program.*" Examination will soon shew that the Modernist cry of the demand for reconstruction of theology rendered necessary by the new knowledge is only ancient Gnosticism resurrected. Modernists are often distinguished by the juggler's sleight of hand, and they deceive their dupes by the swiftness of their movements by which they obscure from the vision of those whom they lead captive the fact that their pretended demonstrations of the incorrectness of the orthodox creed are only reached by ignoring the real facts of

the situation. Beware of the man who says: "The young people who have received a modern education find themselves quite out of touch with the doctrines of the eighteenth century." The fallacy lying at the root of statements of this kind is a trick of the Obscurantist juggler who seeks to beg the whole question by the assumption that the young people have not been led astray by their modern teachers.

I will now proceed to exhibit some types of these Modernist pretenders to be "*Know-Alls*," and to shew up some of their Obscurantist tactics.

I.—*The Obscurantist who thinks to popularize Christianity by keeping out of sight our Lord's depreciation of earthly wealth, and His demand for separation from the world.*

A clear definite instance of what I mean comes to my mind. A prominent lay official in Wesleyan Methodism, just after he and his colleague in the Circuit Stewardship had created no small amount of distress and indignant comment in their Circuit by attending with their wives a whist-drive and dance in connection with a friendly society, preached a sermon in the Circuit Chapel, the subject of which was: "The Causes and Cure of the Decline in the Churches." The gist of the sermon was this: "It used to be said: That the way to heaven is a narrow way (These were his words: terrible, remembering Who it was that said: 'Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life'). But this is a great mistake. Our loving heavenly Father has made the way to heaven very broad. The Churches frighten away from Christianity a large number of people by trying to make the way to heaven narrow. Instead of this, Christian people ought to seek to win the people of the world for Christ by seeking their companionship and joining in their amusements, thus shewing them how Christians can sanctify these things." Our readers will see that this sermon was intended as a public defence of the action taken by himself and his co-steward. This man frankly uttered in public what we have heard many argue in private, and what many utter in their practice if not in speech.

A critic may say, "This is not Doctrinal Obscurantism, which is the subject you have in hand." I reply, I think it is. Modernist writers and preachers are often saying that

lack of ethical teaching has been one great defect of Protestant Evangelicalism. I quite agree. The doctrine of Christianity is a "doctrine according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6'). The end of all religion is holy living, as Carlyle finely says in *Sartor Resartus*: "Conviction is worthless till it convert itself into Conduct." The ethical doctrines of Christianity are the fruitage of all other elements of its doctrine. The ethical teachings of the Gospel are an essential part of its theology. Indeed, they are the fruit to produce which all the other articles of the creed exist. Prominent amongst the ethical precepts of our holy religion are those which enjoin separation from the world, such as: "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matt. 6²⁴; Luke 16¹³). "*Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*" (John 15¹⁹). "*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (1 John 2¹⁵). "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*" (Jas. 4'). The Mammonite Obscurantist who seeks to lead the Church into worldly compromises is an emissary of Satan and of Antichrist. It is unquestionable that Archibald Brown touched the spot in his book on "The Devil's Mission of Amusement." I have no doubt that this repudiation of the teachings of Christ concerning our relations to the world is one of the main causes of the present feebleness of the Churches.

II.—*The Obscurantist who omits from his message unpopular doctrines, vainly thinking that by so doing he may draw into Church-membership those to whom these doctrines are distasteful.*

There can be no doubt that many preachers and teachers are guilty of this form of Obscurantism even with respect to doctrines which they admit to be the truth, and which they do themselves believe with their intellects, and refrain from declaring, in order that they may not raise opposition. There can be no doubt there are some who practise this form of Obscurantism from the base motive of fear lest they may alienate some of those who contribute to their Church funds. They sell their consciences for money. Let us hope that those who conceal the truth from greed of gain are few.

Probably there are more who are led into this snare by the wiles of Satan appearing as an angel of light, and saying to them, the question for you to solve is this: "Is it not better for you to keep these people who will not listen to some Christian doctrines in contact with such truth as they will endure, rather than drive them away by doctrines which you know they will not have at any price?" They are men who are misled by Satan and in a sense keep back the unpalatable doctrine from what superficially is a good intention, viz., a sincere desire to get a hearing for what they deem to be Christian truth. I do not say this with any desire to excuse these Obscurantists. They are inexcusable. They are led by the intrigues of Satan into the sin of partitioning the truth of God. They ought to have recognized the sin of putting asunder what God hath joined together. They ought to have known a truth which has received abundant demonstration in the history of human thought, viz., that a half-truth is always more mischievous than a whole lie, because a lie that is wholly a lie has no dynamic force in it; being the statement of what is not, it is a nullity. But a half-truth has in it the force of the truth which it contains. The preaching which deliberately omits part of the truth, mutilates God's message to mankind; and the worst heresies are those which are mischievous, not because of what they declare, but because of what they omit.

III.—*The Obscurantist who hides from others, and sometimes from himself, the fact that the views which he states as "the assured results" of modern research are often nothing but speculative guesses, and that there is a strong body of facts that are against the theories which he seeks to maintain by dogmatic assertion and not by argument. This type of Obscurantist I call the* **BLUFF-OBSCURANTIST**.

I need not here enlarge on this, because I dealt with it at some length in the last number, and because we are continually adducing evidence of the purely supposititious basis of Modernist theology. The Obscurantists of this school commonly substitute for reason loud-spoken emphasis of affirmation, the intensity of emphasis varying inversely to the degree of strength in their argument.

In all the history of epidemics of Obscurantism probably none has ever surpassed the Apehood Theology of Evolu-

tionism, and the amazing rapidity with which mankind has been led away by the Cagliostros of this cult. In this *Journal* we have repeatedly shewn that the Testimony of the Rocks disproves the Theory of Evolution, and demonstrates that there is no basis of fact upon which to rest the assertion that one species has ever developed into another. The fossils affirm that Evolution has always been what in the jargon of that school is called *Evolution per saltum*, which in Anglo-Saxon English means *Evolution by Jumps*; and Evolution has no bridge to throw across the intervening chasms, and has no sufficient explanation to give as to what produced the jumps.

Another squadron of these Bluff-Obscurantists consists of the disciples of the Higher Criticism (so misnamed) who are disturbing the Churches throughout Christendom by a mutiny against the teachings of Holy Scripture and against the authority of the teachings of Christ Himself, and are sowing discord amongst the Churches, whilst endeavouring to silence the defenders of the Faith by a sanctimonious appeal to the spirit of brotherliness, and by the cry of "No controversy." These are the men who have disturbed the Church with their controversial attack on the Faith pretending to be so full of love that they stand in horror of controversy! Surely this is bluff much after the Kaiser type! My name for the so-called Higher Criticism is **GUESS-CRITICISM**. As this *Journal* is constantly shewing, it is based upon speculative theories, may-bes, and perhapses, unsustained by any substantial foundation of fact. We have constantly brought before our readers the proofs of these statements. The chief pundits of this school are men not well-versed in the practical knowledge of the world, but pedants whose brains are clogged with the cobwebs of their book-shelves, and intoxicated with the poison-gas of sensational poetry and fiction. None but such could accept a construction of history made upon the basis of the idea that no historical narrative can be true that seems improbable to the man whose only apparatus of criticism is a logic-saw-mill. Men of affairs know that *Truth is stranger than fiction*, and that *the unexpected is constantly happening*. As we have repeatedly said, Nietzsche and Germany are the natural outcome of the Guess-Criticism of Dryasdust pedants, whose methods and their results are described in this masterly sentence of Carlyle in

his **Frederick the Great**: "The flaccid Pedantry, ever rummaging and rearranging among learned marine-stores, which thinks itself Wisdom and Insight; the vague maunderings, flutings, indolent impotent day-dreaming, and tobacco-smoking of modern Germany." Alas! alas! that so many English theologians are publishing these speculative Guesses, so largely manufactured in Germany, as the doctrine which is to supersede the teachings of Christ!

IV.—*The Obscurantist who practises the doctrine of Reserve.*

This fourth class is the most mischievous of all, because he misleads the public by masquerading in the guise of orthodox doctrinal pledges. These are they whom our Lord described as **"WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING"** (Matt. 7¹⁵). They claim that they do preach *some* of the doctrines to which they are pledged but not *all* of them. But, inasmuch as when they give their doctrinal pledges they do not tell the public of their reserve, they are really standing before the world under false pretences, producing the impression that they believe in doctrines that in their hearts they regard as erroneous. Some of them do not keep silence about the doctrines which they reserve, but actually assail doctrines contained in the Standards to which they are pledged! But I raise the question of the ethical position of the man whose reserve is the reserve of silence only. He believes certain doctrines which are antagonistic to the contents of the Standards to which he is pledged! By those pledges he supports doctrines which in his heart he believes to be errors! His silence is a support of what he believes to be error. This is Obscurantism of an evil type. This silent support of what he considers to be an error is in a sense a promulgation of that error. If he deems the doctrines with respect to which he keeps silence to be error, it is his **DUTY** to endeavour to save his fellow-men from the mischievous effects of those errors by doing his utmost to expose them. Modernist theologians are often very insistent upon the importance of a strong ethical emphasis in theological teaching. I join with them in this insistence, and I cannot refrain from declaring my agreement with that estimate of the Jesuitical practice of Reserve which says:—**IT IS LYING.**

Topics for Bible-Study Circles.

No. XXXI.

INSPIRATION: THEORIES AND OBJECTIONS.

By REV. W. BACKHOUSE, M.A.

After two articles on Inspiration it may not be unfitting that another should follow, relating to theories that have been proposed as to the nature of Inspiration, and of objections that have been urged against the fact of Inspiration.

I.—ONLY A QUESTION OF DEGREE. One theory maintains that there is no difference between the Inspiration of Scripture, and the Inspiration characteristic of human genius, unless it be a difference in degree. It asserts that "Milton, Shakespeare, Bacon, the Sermon on the Mount, the Apocalypse, and the eighth chapter of the Romans are all inspired; but that which of these is the most valuable document, or whether the Bible, as a whole, is more precious than any other book, are questions which must be decided by examining the observable character and tendency of each book, and the beneficial effect which history may show that each has produced." But this is to confound things that essentially differ. For the Inspiration claimed for the Scripture has this distinctive feature, that it denotes an extraordinary agency of the Holy Spirit on the mind in consequence of which the person who partakes of it is enabled to embrace and communicate the truth of God without error, infirmity, or defect. This has nothing in common with the so-called Inspiration that is attributed to human genius. The one is limited to the workings of nature: nature in its highest sphere it may be, but still nature, and nature only; while the other is supernatural and miraculous, having to do chiefly with truths above nature.

II.—MECHANICAL AND DYNAMICAL. Those who accept the Inspiration of Scripture in its higher sense have been divided as to its mode and method. Some maintain the *Mechanical* theory of Inspiration, which teaches that the Holy Spirit acted on men in a purely passive state. It represents the writers, when under the power of the Inspiring Spirit, as mere machines mechanically answering to the force which moved them. Others advocate the *Dynamical* theory of Inspiration, which denotes an influence acting upon living powers, and manifesting itself through them, according to their natural laws; not converting men into mere machines, but causing all their mental faculties and habits to be used and directed by the Divine Spirit in the work of making known the will of God; not suppressing their individuality, nor restraining the free play of their human thoughts and feelings: but elevating, illuminating and guiding them, yet not so as to supersede them. They were largely passive in receiving the Revelation, but not in the writing of the Scripture.

III.—VERBAL INSPIRATION. Differences of opinion have prevailed as to whether Inspiration is to be regarded as Verbal or otherwise: some holding that the language and the very words were in every case minutely dictated; and others that only the ideas and subject matter were supernaturally revealed, while the language and expres-

sion and colouring were left to the special style and faculty of the individual writer. But even the theory of Verbal Inspiration has been held in different forms. Some have contended for this in a strictly literal sense; that every word was chosen by the Holy Spirit, dictated by Him to the writers, and written as dictated, independently of their own intelligent agency, and without any regard to their mental faculties and habits; while others have adopted a freer and wider interpretation of the term "Verbal." By it they mean that "the inspired servants of God, while they retained the proper use of the powers and faculties with which the God of Providence had endowed them, were always guided or assisted to use such language as would convey 'the mind of the Spirit' in its full and unimpaired integrity." They consider Verbal Inspiration as "entirely consistent with the greatest diversity of mental endowments, culture, and taste of the writers, and with the most perfect exercise of their intelligent agency: consistent with the use of their own memory, their own reason, their own manner of thinking and their own diction; but insisting that it was all under the unerring guidance of the Divine Spirit. Verbal Inspiration admits all this, but asserts that there was the concurrence of the act of God with the act of man: that while the words of Scripture are truly and characteristically the Words of Man, they are at the same time fully and concurrently the Words of God. This view we accept as most closely and satisfactorily in harmony with all the facts of the case. But many prefer the word "plenary" as comprehending all that is properly involved in the term "Verbal," and as being free from certain objections that attach to the use of the latter word. It is of course granted that Verbal Inspiration, in its most literal sense, applies to considerable portions of Scripture, such as those many parts of the Old Testament which consist of direct messages from God, introduced by such expressions as "Thus saith the Lord," and the like; and similarly with certain parts of the New Testament.

IV.—INSPIRATION OF NO VALUE. F. W. Newman held that an authoritative external revelation of moral and spiritual truth is essentially impossible to men; and that even if God were to communicate to mankind the great truths which it concerns them to know, and were to append a perfect code of moral duty, neither of these communications could possess any authority with us on the ground of their coming from God, and could only have authority at all in so far as upon quite independent grounds we were able to authenticate the facts of the former communication as true, and to acknowledge the commands of the latter as right. This would make each individual the final judge as to whether any facts that God might communicate were true, and whether any commands that he might give were right. And even though Inspiration in the highest sense that we claim for it should belong to the records of what God might thus communicate, such Inspiration would have no value, and give to the records no authority; for the acceptance or rejection of any such communication would still require to be determined by each man's individual judgment. Others, following Newman, have adopted the same view; and it has crept in among ourselves. The following is from the *Fernley Lecture* of 1912, p. 98:—"When we speak of the authority of the Bible in the realm of moral and spiritual truth what we really mean is not the authority of a Book or a messenger, but of the truth which they bring to us. The authority of the Bible is not like that of an official document, known to be authoritative because

of the seal affixed to it. Rather it lies in the nature of the truth which it brings, and in the response which it invokes. Truth, in short, is the only thing that has authority for the mind, and the only way in which truth finally evinces its authority is by taking possession of the mind for itself. Its authority lies in itself, and in its power to win the mind, and not in any witness however trustworthy." This, with other statements to the same effect, shows that its author practically endorses the above view.

V. -ST. PAUL'S ALLEGED DISCLAIMER. As one supposed without objection many have asserted that St. Paul himself expressly disclaims Inspiration, at least for a portion of his writings. Four or five passages in 1 Cor. 7 are often adduced to prove that St. Paul distinguishes between what he says by Inspiration, and what he says by himself, and the conclusion is drawn that some parts of his epistles are inspired and some not. In v. 6 the apparent difficulty arises from the ambiguity of our word "permission." If the preferable word "indulgence" or "allowance" were used the meaning would be more clearly presented: "I say this by way of indulgence or allowance for you, not of command to you." Vv. 10 and 11 are often misunderstood to mean that he distinguished between his own commands and those received by revelation from Christ. This is not so, but rather, as Dean Alford says, he is "about to give them a command resting not merely on inspired apostolic authority, but on that of the Lord Himself; the command of Christ being given in Matt. 5^{31, 32} and Mark 10¹², so that all supposed distinction between the apostle when writing of himself and of the Lord is quite irrelevant." That is, he was re-stating a command which our Lord Himself gave while He was on earth; and the contrast lies simply between that and what he as an inspired apostle might give. Again in vv. 12, 25 he is erroneously supposed to mean that in certain matters he wrote according to his own uninspired judgment, although in other matters guided by the Holy Spirit. But the mistake lies in supposing that the expression "commandment of the Lord" means a communication made to the apostle by the Holy Spirit, whereas it really signifies an express command or direction of Christ while He was on earth, and which had now become historical. So that he is not contrasting what he says by the Spirit and what he says by himself. He is simply contrasting what he states as having been already expressly commanded by Christ, and what he says by the Spirit in reference to cases which did not exist when our Lord was on earth, and concerning which, therefore, He had not spoken. So then in none of these cases does he disclaim Inspiration. In the first his meaning is that what he says was matter of "permission," allowance or indulgence, because of the peculiar conditions of the persons whom he addressed, and not an abiding command or positive injunction to everyone. In the second he is restating a command once spoken by our Lord Himself, and not in regard to that matter uttering an inward suggestion made by the Holy Spirit to himself. In the third case he declares that he is not restating any special command given by Christ when on earth, but is giving utterance to the inward suggestion of the Spirit. In the one case the Spirit is fulfilling one part of our Lord's promise: "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14²⁶); in the other the Spirit is fulfilling the other part of the promise: "He shall teach you all things, and guide you into all truth" (John 14²⁶: 16¹³).

Notes.

The Need for Wesley Bible Union Work.

No one realizes more clearly than do the Editors of this *Journal* that for very many of the English people the war has meant a continually-increasing drain upon resources and an increasing difficulty in finding the wherewithal for the necessities of life. To such the question inevitably comes—Must I now for a time withdraw my subscriptions and donations from those causes which I have hitherto supported? The methodical giver who sets aside a fixed proportion of his incomings for religious objects will probably feel that the gifts to God's causes must be maintained at almost any cost; his mind will be at peace about the matter; and this is only one illustration of the manner in which that Biblical and simple method of financing religious causes settles without difficulty many otherwise vexed questions. Others will, in the uncertainty which hedges round their religious finance, cast around to find the cause or causes which they feel most at liberty to temporarily pass over.

To one and all we would respectfully submit that the work of the Wesley Bible Union is one which above almost all others needs support and deserves to be kept in very affectionate remembrance. This is not one of those popular causes which will be set at financial ease by wealthy men as soon as they find that it is passing through financial straits. We have very few wealthy men and women among our supporters. It is perhaps only what we should have expected. We stand for primitive Christianity, and not many wealthy are called. A cause like ours, a hard battle against the popular tendencies, against the "world-spirit" which is in so great a degree the Devil, is not likely to attract the support of many of the rich. Some of our supporters are wealthy men, who have shown their sympathy by actual financial aid. We could wish that all our sympathisers would shew their sympathy in this way, and that those who have wealth would give large donations to our work.

We trust all our readers will remember how deep is the need for the work of Bible defence in Methodism; how much ought to be done which cannot be done for lack of money; and how very little probability there is that any of the rich men who support popular causes with large sums of money, and who are always ready to rescue such causes from their difficulties, will come to the aid of a cause like ours. A cause which antagonises the spirit of the times is not likely to attract many men of wealth.

To What is God Leading Us?

Certainly there is no room to question that the evils of modernism are becoming clearer than ever. Before us lie two letters just received. One is from a Local Preacher of long standing. He has so long been working for God in Wesleyan Methodism and he cannot see the way open to him now that his confidence in Methodism has gone. "I am at present," he says, "practically doing nothing for Wesleyan Methodists, as I can no longer repose any more confidence in them. My prayers and best wishes are still with the W.B.U. for truth and our Standards." The other correspondent, a lady, says: "I have had talks lately with several Ministers and Clergymen, and their beliefs are so varied and to me so wrong, that I think it is almost hopeless to do anything. I do not speak of this in my family. I want them to continue to feel respect for those who have taken up such sacred duties."

These two are only typical of large numbers of the most intelligent and earnest of our people. What can we say to them? What advice can we offer? What course are they to pursue? These people exist in considerable numbers, not only in our own Church, but also in all other Churches. There is no Church in the land free from the paralysing taint of modern

rationalism. But there are individual congregations, in the New Testament sense "Churches," which are true to the Faith, inasmuch at all events as they are ministered to by men of the Bible Christian pattern. Some of these Churches are of the Methodist name, some Congregational, Baptist, or Presbyterian, some Episcopalian. If there is such a Church in the neighbourhood of our members, it is such a Ministry that they ought to strenuously support. But in many places there is not such a Ministry. What then? In a few cases that question has already been answered. There have sprung up in various parts of this country and of America undenominational Churches which aim at the revival of Primitive Christianity. They are made up of Christians from practically all the other Churches. A friend recently told us that in her town, a very large one, she was continually surprised to find how many of the members of these Independent Churches were one-time Wesleyan Methodists. Is it not very probable that God is leading His faithful people to the formation of a new and truly Biblical Church to witness faithfully to His Word and be the Evangelical Church of the future?

Rally Round Those Who Defend the Faith.

But it may still be possible to save Wesleyan Methodism; or even if the answer to all such suggestions is a denial of the possibility, it is still most certainly possible to save a large remnant, which may play a very blessed and faithful part in the new religious movement which will create throughout Great Britain a firm and loyal witness to the truth. Do not doubt that such a movement is coming, and by all means save some. We beseech all loyal Methodists to give a fervent support to every Wesleyan Methodist Minister who is a member of the Wesley Bible Union. Let such men know that they have staunch supporters. They know very well indeed that their loyalty to the Truth brings them very staunch enemies! Next we implore our faithful Methodists to continue to give support to the Union in matters of finance, and if at all possible to increase the support they give. And next we beg of them to exert themselves to rally to the banner of truth some of those whose sympathies at present are sound but who have either no knowledge or no deep care. We greatly wish our members everywhere would hold meetings in small halls, drawing-room meetings, and cottage meetings wherever it is at all possible to make the very simple arrangements. It must not be said that meetings are impossible, for amusements are flourishing at a busy height which, we are told, has never before been reached. If people can crowd picture palaces, it is evidently possible for other people to come out to religious meetings. Let us be up and doing!

Ten years hence, we would venture to predict, there are tens of thousands of Wesleyans who will wring their hands in bitter regret that they *did nothing* just when a very determined and costly fight was made for true Biblical Methodism; and it is very possible that they will then seek to make a stand, and will fail in spite of all their tears. "For ye know that when afterward Esau desired to inherit the blessing he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance) though he sought it diligently with tears."

"The Church the Hotbed of Infidelity."

The above headline is the statement of the Rev. J. T. Brihan, D.D., in the "Bible Champion," the very vigorous and valuable organ of orthodox opinion in the States of America. The Editor, Rev. Dr. Jay B. Hamilton, deserves very warm congratulations upon the vigour, timeliness, and ability which are displayed in its pages. We have frequently declared that the real source of the infidelity of to-day is the Church of Jesus Christ itself, and particularly its ministerial section. No more terrible statement could

be made. Neither is the terrible nature of this statement mitigated to any great extent by the plea that those who are undermining the Christian Faith from within the borders of the Christian Church are quite "sincere." They may be, and very likely indeed most of them are; but their place is not within the Church whose tenets they are, in increasingly large measure, ceasing to hold. There is need for a new organization, in which those who hold fluctuating fragments of the Christian Message can dwell at ease, supported by the funds of those who agree with them. Their "sincerity" does not give them any rightful place in the Christian Church, or any right to betray and destroy it.

In America there is evidently the same judgment formed by faithful men, viz., that the peril to the Christian Faith comes from within, as witness these words from Dr. Brihan's article:—

The only infidelity which is dangerous to faith to-day and which is worth considering is that which is found in the so-called Christian Church and is masquerading in the livery of heaven under the banner of "modern thought."

We are told by men in the Church that God has not spoken in His Word; that the Bible is merely a human book; that such a thing as Inspiration is unthinkable; that God cannot manifest Himself in visible form; that what purports to be prophecy was written after the events indicated; that miracles are impossible; that man is not to believe the accounts in the Bible of the miracles performed either by the prophets and servants of God or by Christ Himself.

The Increasing Difficulty of Free Church Federation.

What is to be the attitude of loyal evangelical Christians to the movements within the ranks of the Free Churches? Rationalism has already made the position very difficult, but it seems probable that the addition of sacerdotalism will make it more difficult still. Unless the Free Church Council confines itself to united social and moral action, severely leaving alone the definitely spiritual and religious, it will be quite impossible, we fear—indeed we fear it is quite impossible—for loyal evangelicals to join in that movement. The matter has been again brought to our notice through the action of the Ilford Free Church Council, which invited the Rev. Dr. Orchard to address it. This led to a vigorous protest from the Secretary of the Protestant Press Bureau, Mr. A. Lelièvre. In a letter to the local paper of that great suburb he says:—

Do members of the Council know what kind of services are held in Dr. Orchard's Church?

On Advent Sunday, December 2nd, the cleric was vested as priest in alb and chasuble. A great crucifix had been erected over the pulpit, and a procession perambulated the Chapel at the commencement of the proceedings. At the supreme moment of "sacrifice" Dr. Orchard elevated a large wafer above his head, and the congregation joined in the idolatrous adoration of it. "When I come to die," he says, "I hope someone will hold a crucifix before my eyes" (*Catholic Times* of November 11th, 1915). In a sermon on the "Priestly Sacrifice," p. 8, Dr. Orchard writes: "It is alleged that I have made priestly claims and introduced Roman ceremonial. The charge is perfectly true." "We must stay inside the Free Churches and catholicise them," further writes the cleric out of place. Some explanation is due to the supporters of the Free Church Council.

The Methodist Attitude to Recent Theology.

What ought to be the Methodist attitude to recent theology? Much of it is of a very unsettling character, and much of it is aimed at the destruction of the Christian faith. What ought a Methodist to do regarding it? Ought he to increase its circulation by reviewing it, when it is certain, if read, to unsettle the Biblical Faith which God has given to Methodism? Ought he to treat teachings which subvert doctrines of our Standards as things indifferent to which Methodist attention may, without warning, be called? Ought he to discuss alternative teachings concerning great matters upon which our Church has already solemnly and for long years

declared the true teaching of God's Word? Is he justified in following a course which cannot result in anything else but the weakening of Methodist belief in the teachings of our own Church?

These questions have often been brought into our mind when reading the reviews which certain of our ministers contribute to the Methodist Press; and further questions inevitably arise regarding the responsibility of the editors who allow contributors to publish such reviews in their columns. The matter especially before our mind to-day arises out of a column upon "Recent Theology" in the *Methodist Recorder* of October 24th by Rev. Dr. Davison. He reviews a volume which discusses Eternal Punishment, Annihilation, and Universalism as alternative theories regarding the final destiny of the wicked. He praises the volume highly, although the whole drift of the book, it is clear, is to leave that great and utterly momentous subject as an open question. But for Methodism this is *not* an open question! Methodism has always spoken with an emphatic voice upon this matter, and all Methodist Ministers have declared that they believe the doctrine of Methodism is in accord with Holy Scripture. How can it possibly be regarded as permissible for a minister, who has pledged himself year by year to the Methodist doctrine and also promised to banish and drive away all strange and erroneous doctrine contrary to God's Word, to advance the circulation, by a favourable review, of a volume which treats the Methodist doctrine as an open question; and to discuss in that review, without condemnation, doctrines which are subversive of the Methodist teaching which he is pledged to defend?

One Theological Change Declared to be Effected.

With what seems very clearly to be a chuckle of delight, the *Christian World* declares that one theological change at all events has been effected by the war. "It has led the Established Church to accept almost universally the practice of public prayer for the dead." The *Christian World* brings forward a very sad instance of this. Rev. Dr. Chase, the Bishop of Ely, is not a ritualist; but at a recent service for Cambridge soldiers fallen in the war, the three separate prayers contained the following petitions quoted by the *Christian World* :—

- i. "That when the judgment shall come both *these our brothers* and we may be found acceptable in Thy sight."
- ii. "That we *and these our brothers* may have our perfect bliss in Thy glory."
- iii. "In Thy redeeming love have mercy on the fallen."

"Even the rigidity of an Established Church," declares the *Christian World*, "cannot restrain the changing currents of Christian thought." Certain it is that human weakness makes even orthodox Christians unwilling to stem the tide of popular desire. But in this case we believe that they mistake the strength of such popular desire for prayer for the dead as may actually exist.

History Repeats Itself in the Eclipse of Nonconformity.

Meantime, with all these movements away from the true faith and toward ancient errors which have in other days been held off by men and women of the Evangelical creed, many are attempting to foster schemes of union with the Episcopal Church. These schemes are the most artificial of all the schemes for union now so eagerly advanced! What madness it would be for us to unite with a Church which is not really one Church but three, all at daggers drawn as to vital tenets of the Christian Faith, and only held together by the external bond of State establishment! Dr. Gore, the Bishop of Oxford, wants union with the Greek Church but could not support union with the English Free Churches unless these first of all admit that they have no valid ministry and submit to episcopal re-ordination.

Our impression is that Dr. Gore has of late years been moving toward the true faith regarding Holy Scripture. On the other hand Dr. Henson, the Bishop of Hereford, wants close relationships with the Free Churches, and has promised to preach in a Congregational Church in the town of Hereford. This in itself is admirable; but sad to say Dr. Henson has modernist sympathies. On that ground he is not a fit occupant of an evangelical pulpit, in spite of the delightful brotherliness of his personal and ecclesiastical attitude. The modernist is the brotherly man, likely to influence the Nonconformists of to-day; the more orthodox man is unspiritual and exclusive. So also in that disastrous period which preceded the decline of Nonconformity 200 years ago, and spoiled the fine promise of the great movement of 1662. It was the wide-spread and powerful influence of two Episcopalianism which specially helped to lead into the path of ruin the Nonconformists to whom God had only lately consigned the main spiritual interests of the land.

How much need there is for vigilance! "What I say unto you, I say unto all: WATCH!"

An Extraordinary Series of Conferences.

The need for vigilance is all the more extreme when we take due note of another extraordinary movement of to-day, in which certain Wesleyan Methodists are exchanging views in a very lengthy series of Conferences with members of the Established Church. We learn from the letter sent by the Bishop of London to his diocese before he started for Macedonia, that either six or seven of these Conferences have already been held. We see that Mr. Athelstan Riley, one of the most "advanced" ritualists in the Established Church, is one of the laymen engaged in the Conferences; and we need to add that the Bishop of London himself is one of the most extreme Romanisers in the country. What possible ground for prolonged conference can Wesleyan Methodists find with such determined upholders of sacerdotalism? But perhaps it will be best just to let the Bishop's letter tell its own tale. He hopes so much from these conferences that he has got the bench of Bishops to elect five representatives to attend them, and thinks, ere he starts on a perilous voyage, that he ought to inform his diocese of the progress of the movement afoot! He says:—

Before I leave, the sixth or seventh conference will be held at London House with the representatives of the Wesleyan Methodists. Five diocesan Bishops, chosen by the other bishops, serve upon the Committee; and our laymen comprise Sir E. Clarke, Sir Montague Barlow, Mr. Athelstan Riley, and the Right Hon. George Russell. An interim report will probably be issued after the next conference, as was done by the Committee on Faith and Order, summarizing what we have arrived at as a possible basis of agreement, and I shall be interested on my return to hear how far the proposals have found acceptance in both bodies. I do hope that everyone will realize that some definite step, even if it involve some risk, must be taken towards re-union, unless we are to let the divine warnings given in the war, of the mischief and wickedness of our divisions, pass unregarded. Let us make the whole question of the re-union of Christendom a subject of special prayer this autumn and winter.

The Welcome-Home for our Soldiers and Sailors when the War Ends.

What a welcome it will be! The home-life of the United Kingdom is one of the most beautiful things on earth. Napoleon spoke of it as the thing which made the British armies unconquerable. With all our faults we feel sure that the beauty, purity, and intense love that reign in the British home constitute one of the greatest of our national assets. When our sons and brothers return there will be such a rejoicing as perhaps the world has never yet seen. At such times the peril is very great that the exuberance of joy will in many cases mean such an outburst of sensual indulgence that it will

spell permanent ruin for many, and will involve the outgoing of a torrent of evil that will carry with it disease, and moral corruption, the effects of which may be felt for centuries, if there are centuries yet remaining for the human race on earth. Oh that we could do something to lessen the horrors worse than the carnage of war that may come out from a terrible explosion of unholy and unrestrained sensual indulgence, gluttony, drunkenness, and unchastity! What kind of a welcome should the Christian churches prepare for the men? We would like to appeal for a **BANQUET OF GOD** in every church. By this we mean that in preparation for the home-coming we should prepare to receive our brothers worthily when they come back to us, by spreading before them a banquet of holy living such as they never knew before. The debt of debts which each one of us owes to our brother-man is that he should find in us the very best that God can make us,—the best intellectually, the best socially, the best religiously. Every lack of thoroughness of consecration in any one of us is an injury to all our associates, and casts a stumbling block across their path. Neglect of complete consecration on the part of any one of us means the retention of something that cannot fail to hurt the home-comers who shall come back into association with us. The first consideration of the churches in their preparation to welcome back the men shall be to make sure that when the men shall return they shall feel the presence of God amongst us, and discern His Presence specially manifest in our assemblies and in our individual lives.

The Christian Duty of HOSPITALITY.

But while we insist that man is not a body but a spirit, and that a spiritual banquet is the best that I can spread before my brother; yet the Bible does not despise the festivities that have to do with eating and drinking. Indeed, it magnifies and glorifies such feasts, and teaches us that they may be, and ought to be, sacramental channels of blessing. Our Lord ushered in His ministry at the wedding-feast at Cana of Galilee. He was a frequent guest at feasts, and has left the perfumed ointment with which Mary regaled Him as a monument never to be lost sight of by His church. The Holy Ghost has taught us plainly in the inspired word that hospitality is a Christian duty to be shown not only to friends but to strangers. *Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality* (Rom. xii¹³). *"A bishop must be a lover of hospitality"* (Tit. i⁸). *"Use hospitality to one another without grudging"* (I Pet. iv. ⁹). *"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"* (Heb. xiii¹⁻²). In his Third Epistle the Apostle John has made the hospitality of Gaius a theme for the permanent admiration of the church of God. We are quite sure that our Lord would be displeased if His churches did not welcome home with generous and ungrudging festivities the heroes who have placed themselves as a living wall between the Motherland and destruction. He who has declared that God takes account of even a cup of cold water given in His name will be sure to grace the feasts of holy welcome which His people will accord to our brethren when they come home. We must also remember that festivities of unholy revelry would be no kindness to those who will return, but would be a worse unkindness than if we received them with guns or bayonets. To wound their souls with sinful pleasure would be worse than to kill their bodies with poison-cups.

Every Church should be a Sunny-Nook.

Sour asceticism is not only not a doctrine of Christianity, but it is Satanic heresy of the worst type. Paul unhesitatingly describes it as a *"doctrine of devils."* "Now," he says, *"the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared*

with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. iv 1-5). To refuse the legitimate pleasures which the bounty of our dear Father God has put within our reach is really to commit a sin of base ingratitude. Pleasure is only sinful when it is sought in violation of the commands of God, or when its enjoyment interferes with the fulfilment of some higher duty. Gloom and harsh austerity calculated to make the church repulsive are sins of a very heinous character. The church of God ought always to be a centre of holy joy, and all men ought to be sure that there is one place on earth where they shall without fail find the radiance of heaven's sunshine viz., the church of God. It is of the uttermost importance that the sailors and soldiers when they come home should find the church to be of all places the **SUNNIEST**.

A Prescription for Filling the Church with Sunshine.

That prescription is this :

SEE THAT THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CHURCH IS A BIBLE-ATMOSPHERE.

One of the supreme characteristics of the Bible is that it is preeminently **A BOOK OF JOY**. Let any one make a concordance-study of such words as *Joy, Rejoice, Gladness, Sing, Song, Music, Harps, Merry, Triumph*, and the like, and he will soon learn that the religion of the Bible is the direct antithesis of gloomy and sour asceticism; and that Joy is not only a privilege but a **DUTY** of a Christian. Lack of joy is an evidence of deficient thoroughness of consecration. In a wonderful passage the Holy Ghost speaking by Paul powerfully sets before us the contrast between the empty hilarity of carnal revelry and the overflowing ecstasy of the joy of the Holy Spirit:—"*Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess* (R.V. *riot*), *but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Eph. 5¹⁸⁻²⁰). The word rendered "*excess*" in the A.V. and "*riot*" in the R.V. of this passage is very remarkable and significant. It is "*asotia*" which literally means "*non-salvation.*" The translators of the A.V. took it as referring to the evils of intemperance on the part of those who seek exhilaration in the wine-cup. The Revisers found in the word a reference to the riotous conduct so often produced by wine. But we are inclined to think that Paul had here in mind the etymological significance of the word, and sought to indicate that the excitement produced by wine is the negation of salvation, that **WINE IS A GREAT ANTI-SALVATIONIST**. The key to supreme human Joy is the experience of

THE JOY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The Church of God should always be

THE HOUSE OF EXHILARATION;

and its members should everywhere carry about with them

HEARTS FULL OF MELODY.

The Wesley Doctrine of Inspiration in the Light of Modern Research.

It will be observed that men who hold modernist opinions assume that no man who knows the results of modern research can hold the Wesley Doctrine of Inspiration or of the Person of Christ; and they charge with Obscurantism those who maintain these doctrines as set forth in our Standards. We challenge the production of anything *proved to be fact* discovered by modern research that calls for any change in relation to these doctrines. We admit that it is im-

possible to reconcile the doctrines in question with the theoretical guesses which the Higher Critics (so misnamed) seek to impose upon the church, or with some popular speculations of Modern Philosophy. But there is no proof whatever of this guesswork proceeding from the school of Professor Man's Invention, and there is no ground that will stand in the Court of Reason for insisting that our theology must be made to conform to the dogmatisms of these Theorists and Speculators. The Science which they represent has been rightly described by Paul when he calls it "*empty deceit; the tradition of men; the baby-lore of this world*" (Col. 2⁸); "*fables*" (2 Tim. 4⁴ these Modernist critics tell us that the Bible is much more precious when we have learnt that the Books of Daniel, Jonah, &c., are fables made by men); "*profane babblings and knowledge falsely so called*" (1 Tim. 6²⁰). On the other hand, we are bold to affirm that modern research strongly confirms the doctrine of the superhuman origin and the infallible and final authority of Holy Scripture. Nothing but supernatural inspiration can account for the fact that the Bible-writers, living in the midst of theories concerning natural science that modern research has shewn to be absurd, have been preserved from introducing these absurdities into their writings, and that it is impossible to find in the Bible a single monstrous violation of scientific truth. Nothing but the orthodox doctrine of inspiration can explain the wonderful anticipations of scientific discovery to be found in Holy Writ. Add to these things the fact that the discoveries of modern archæology are rapidly disproving the hypothetical account of the history of Israel invented by the Guess-Critics, and in multitudinous details is correcting the errors of man's invention in the field of history, and demonstrating the minute historical accuracy of Holy Scripture. So we might go on, shewing that modern learning has all along the lines strengthened the evidences of Christianity; that is to say, the real *fact-learning* does this, as distinguished from the *guesses* of speculators who are often eager to distinguish themselves and display their cleverness by some new ingenious theory that will revolutionize human thought.

The Present Status of the Prohibition Movement in the United States of America.

The Rev. James Mitchell Bennetts, District Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, writes:—

The United States Congress last year passed a bill for the insertion, into the Constitution of the United States, of a clause forever prohibiting the manufacture and sale, importation or exportation, of alcoholic liquors for beverage purposes. The Senate passed this in the month of August by a vote of 65 to 20. It required a two-thirds majority in each House, but the vote as given above was largely in excess of the required majority. The House passed it in December by a vote of 282 to 128. It remained necessary for three-fourths of the States to ratify this action of Congress by a majority vote in each House of the State Legislature. Since January 1st, 14 States have ratified, eight of them being Prohibition States, and six previously wet. The Prohibition States are Mississippi, Virginia, South Carolina, North Dakota, Montana, South Dakota, Arizona, and Georgia. The wet States are Kentucky, Maryland, Texas, Delaware, Massachusetts, and Louisiana. It is apparent that we only need, therefore, 22 to complete ratification. There are 20 Prohibition States to hear from, and we believe we can confidently count on 19 of the 20 for ratification. There is a little doubt about the other State, because of the "States Rights" view held within that State. We have, we believe, three wet States that can be absolutely counted upon to ratify—Florida, Wyoming, and Vermont; and there is practically no question that Ohio, which voted for Prohibition last year, but failed to achieve it, because of rascality in connection with the count, will pass State-wide Prohibition this fall and elect a Legislature which will ratify. There are several other States which may contribute to an overwhelming majority in favour of ratification. We feel pretty certain that by the first of May, 1919, enough States will have ratified to make this bill operative. In the meanwhile the war has been forcing the hands of the Government. For

some months now there has been absolute Prohibition of whisky manufacture. The Food and Fuel Administrators cut down the output of beer some time ago to 50% of the average, and they have recently announced that with November 30th there would be an entire Prohibition of the manufacture of beer.

The Senate of the United States has passed a bill which will create bone-dry Prohibition for the duration of war, and reconstruction period after the war, to become operative on the 1st of July next. There is very little doubt but that the House will confirm the action of the Senate in this matter. It is, therefore, apparent that with the exception of cider and light wines we shall have National Prohibition within a few weeks after the 1st of December, and bone-dry Prohibition on the 1st of July. Inasmuch as the National Prohibition measure gave the liquor traffic 12 months after ratification, in which to close up their business, the operation of the War Council in America will bring bone-dry Prohibition to the States eight months before it will be feasible under the Ratification Plan. Most of the liquor forces in this country see the inevitable ahead, and are, as best they can, reconciling themselves to their fate; but, of course, there are many who are determined to fight to the very last ditch.

Rev. H. C. Morton's further article upon the doctrinal aspect of Methodist Union is postponed until next month.

The Bible and Modern Thought.

MR. J. ALDRIDGE.

It is very important that we should have a clear idea of the significance of the chief currents in religious thought at the present day, and point out where we stand in relation to them. There are three main currents—

1. *Philosophy.* 2. *Criticism.* 3. *Science.*

Probably only a few are deeply interested in Philosophy, therefore we shall be as brief as possible. It is necessary to say something about this, because there is a good deal of this kind of thing in the air: we meet with it in our magazines, newspapers, and in books. It is almost necessary that we should have some idea of one or two points concerning it. The main current in philosophical thinking that we have to deal with may be described as that which seeks to break down the distinction between God and His universe, which seeks to merge the life of God in the life of the world, denying to God any other or higher life than that which He has in the world. We meet with this in crude form in the work of a writer like Haeckel, where we have his ideas about *one Substance*. But we find it in more refined form in that idealism which is known by the name of Hegelianism. The idea of it is this: there is no real distinction between God and the universe. The life of God is the life which He has in the universe, and it is vain to think or speak of God as having a life above and beyond this world. This idea is often met

with under the name of the immanence of God. Do not misunderstand us ; there is a very deep truth in the idea of the immanence of God. We are only speaking of this particular phase of that idea. The immanence of God plays a large part in what is spoken of as the "New Theology." There it is degrading to God, and it is as unscriptural as it is unphilosophical. It makes the universe and man parts of God. He may transcend them, but He includes them, and is realising Himself in and through them. But, we ask, how can he be God, if he consists, in part, of what is imperfect ? If He existed from eternity, He must have been perfect from the beginning, all possible experiences must have been His from eternity, and nothing can ever be added to Him.

How, then, can He be realising Himself through an imperfect universe ? How sublimely different from this crude and unphilosophical notion of God, contained in much modern thought, is the Christian conception of Him as eternally perfect, the Blessed and Adorable One, in Whom all ideals are realised, a real, concrete, self-existent, self-determined Being, of Whom and to Whom and through Whom are all things !

If we take the Bible view of God, it, too, believes in the immanence of God ; but it affirms also His transcendence. It never confounds God and the world, and, while it regards the world as utterly dependent on Him, it never makes Him in any wise dependent on the world. It holds these vital truths of God's immanence and transcendence jointly, and never allows the one to obscure the other.

"Hast thou not known ? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faintest not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of His understanding" (Isaiah 40²⁸).

There you have His transcendence.

"He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40^{29, 31}).

There you have His immanence.

Is not this an infinitely grander picture, of God than the pantheistic view met with either in book or sermon ?

What can the New Theology give us that we do not already possess in the Father-God of the old theology ? "Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands or feet."

"The same Being, Whose eye is abroad over the whole

universe, gives vegetation to every blade of grass, and motion to every particle of blood which circulates through the veins of the minutest animal ; though His mind takes into its comprehensive grasp immensity and all its wonders, I am as much known to Him as if I were the single object of his attention ; He marks all my thoughts, . . . and, with an exercise of power which I can neither describe nor comprehend, the same God Who sits in the highest heaven and reigns over the glories of His firmament, is at my right hand to give me breath which I draw and every comfort which I enjoy" (Chalmers).

Such is the God and Father Whom we have been taught by the Bible to revere and love. How poor the pantheistic conception of the Eternal as compared with this ! It is only a travesty of the Great Reality. The point where this type of philosophy touches very vitally our Christianity is in the doctrine of *sin*. We can easily see that if the only life of God we can speak of is the life He has in the world, in the developing life in the universe, sin also must be taken up into the life of God. It is a phase of God's life, a stage in the self-development of God. That is simply to deny that sin is sin in the real sense of the word at all. We find in the New Theology of R. J. Campbell that "sin never had any real existence" (p. 45), but perhaps the climax of sin-extenuation is reached in the following :—"Sin itself is a quest for God—a blundering quest, but a quest for all that. . . . That drunken debauch was a quest for life, a quest for God. The *roué* you saw in Piccadilly last night was engaged in his blundering quest for God" (New Theology, p. 153). Notice the effect of thinking from this standpoint on the Christian Gospel. If we take away the idea of sin, the vital idea of sin, from the Gospel, we have no need for a doctrine of redemption, and the whole Christian scheme comes down. We do not think, however, that earnest Christian faith is in much danger of being seriously imperilled by this type of philosophy.

There are two great bulwarks ever standing up against it. One is the consciousness we each have of our own personality ; the other is the consciousness which every sound mind has of the difference between right and wrong. Good is not evil, evil is not good. Evil is not good in the making—it is the antithesis of good, it is the thing which ought not to be. When a man has been enlightened by the Spirit of

God to know what sin is, to know what faith in God is, to know what communion with God is, to know what life in God and service of God are, that man is in little real danger of being carried off his feet by this pseudo-philosophy. After reading the works of the modern theological thought-leaders, we seriously conclude that Modernism is in essence the sophism of which Paul speaks :—"Therefore it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will set aside the knowledge of the intelligent." "Where is the wise man? where the scribe? where the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" "For when, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God, it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe" (1 Cor. I ¹⁹⁻²¹). "Professing to be wise they became fools" (Rom. I ²²). "Beware lest there be anyone who maketh a prey of you through an empty and deceitful philosophy, which is according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2 ⁸). "O Timothy, guard the thing committed in trust *to thee*, avoiding profane vain babblings and oppositions of knowledge falsely so named" (1 Tim. 6 ²⁰).

This one thing stands at least assured to us, so far as Rationalistic Criticism is concerned, that it does not make the slightest approach to removing this supernatural Christ from the world's life, nor express an argument towards that end worth the reading twice, nor the least explanation of the conditions of Apostolic times, nor so much as approach to touching with real disparagement the hem of the garment of that majestic, imperishable, Divine Realisation on earth. Slowly and surely is that Great Divine Fact of human life beginning to stand forth; and with whatever intention criticism may have regarded and worked towards the transcendent problem He presents, this, at least, is certain, that that reconstruction has begun which can only end in revealing from behind its earth-clouds that Greatest Glory of humanity, by the gradual emergence of that Face and Form, disclosing the centre of all rational human thought, and the coming object of the race's worship: Jesus Christ the Lord, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; in Whom is all power in heaven and on earth, in Whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—the Divine Humanity, Who is God Himself revealed.

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Methodist Union and the Question of Doctrine.—(*Continued.*)

REV. HAROLD C. MORTON, B.A.

Neither in the Statement of the Primitive Methodist Church, nor in that of the United Methodist Church, do I find anything adequate either upon the doctrine of human nature or upon the doctrine of human destiny. These doctrines in the degenerate judgment of Modern English Christianity form a thin ice over which it is needful to skate warily and fast. The surface ice only thinly covers the profound depths of Biblical revelation. Were it broken they would be plunged into the great Bible doctrines of man's total depravity and the eternal existence of the lost.

The United Methodist Church has really nothing in its declaration regarding man's fallen nature as evil. The following sentences are all that it says regarding the doctrine of Human Nature :—"Man as a moral being is free and responsible, and in the exercise of his freedom has fallen into sin and condemnation." This has nothing to say concerning the sinfulness of human nature. Man is free, and has used his freedom to sin, and has been condemned for sinning. Here is no doctrine of **SIN**. Later on, other clauses of the statement refer to sanctification : "Believers, by the life of

obedient faith, perfect holiness in the fear of God." And again: "The Holy Spirit . . . dwells in every believer to strengthen and sanctify." But what sanctification is this? It seems to be a sanctification of the life rather than of the heart—for this statement has no doctrine of heart-sin and therefore no gospel of heart-cleansing. "Consecration" is the right term to apply to the life, but Sanctification is Sanctification of the *heart*. So Wesley sings—

O for a HEART to praise my God,
A HEART from sin set free,
A HEART which always feels Thy blood
So freely spilt for me!

It is very difficult to see how, without any doctrine of heart-sin, a theology of salvation can be constructed at all. Certainly the absence of such a fundamental doctrine, however much in harmony with the time-spirit, would, if insisted upon, be a fatal barrier to union with a Biblical Church.

What the Primitive Methodist Church teaches upon the doctrine of Human Nature it is difficult to say. In their Statement (which is intended as a summary of the teachings of Wesley's 44 Sermons and Notes) clauses *c* and *d* may have some bearing upon the matter. The clauses read as follows:—

(*c*) The innocence of our first parents when they were first created.

(*d*) Their fall and that of their posterity.

This does not appear, when carefully considered, to take us very far. It teaches that innocence was lost by the Fall, and that all members of the human race have lost innocence. But what about heart-sin? The Sanctified do not regain innocence. What is it that they do regain? What is Sanctification? Deliverance from what? The Primitive Methodist Statement does not seem to be superior in this respect to the Statement of the United Methodist Church. Of heart-sin, original sin, the "taint and corruption of the nature of every man that is engendered of the seed of Adam," it says nothing. Yet is not this one of the *fundamental* doctrines of the Christian Faith? Certainly the Bible gives to it a great and even a central place. Salvation is essentially Salvation from heart-sin. "From within, out of the heart of men," said our Divine Lord, "evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness. All these things proceed from within." So great is the evil of human nature that our

Lord described it as "dead" (John 5²⁵). St. Paul received that word, also, and greatly emphasised it; and to him were given also many parallel teachings, such as that men are "by nature Children of Wrath," and that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be." There has been much discussion in the Primitive Methodist Church regarding a change in their Statement of Doctrine, and I have carefully read three other proposed Statements. The forms of Statement proposed by the Connexional Committee and by Dr. Peake respectively do not materially alter the old Statement in this respect. The Norwich District Committee proposes a very short Statement, consisting of six brief Articles of Faith, Article 2 of which reads:—

"(2) Man, though disobedient and thro' that disobedience estranged from God, is yet the Child of God."

This last Statement at all events declares man to be estranged from God; but on other grounds, not least because it is Sabellian in character ("the existence of a God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"), it is utterly impossible as a Statement for Biblical Christians. This very Article 2, with its statement that man is the Child of God, is quite out of harmony with Scripture. I conclude, therefore, that the old and still authoritative Statement is without any doctrine of human depravity, not by accident, but by intention. It seems perfectly evident that if every other problem of Methodist Union were solved, the problem of Doctrinal Union would still remain for solution.

The other great doctrine which I have mentioned is the doctrine of Human Destiny. What about Eternal Life and Eternal Punishment? No one questions Eternal Life; but there is no more unpopular doctrine than Eternal Punishment. Do the Statements of the other Methodist Churches boldly face and declare the teaching of the Scriptures? The Sermons and Notes of John Wesley do not flinch from declaring "the whole counsel of God" upon this great and terrible subject. But the Statements which I am considering are indefinite, and as it seems to me evasive.

They both declare that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Righteous and the Wicked; but neither of them says anything upon the subject of Punishment to which a Universalist or Restorationist need take exception. The United Methodist Church says:—

"They who have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation."

What is the Condemnation? What does it involve? Does it mean banishment from the presence of God? Is it eternal death, eternal punishment? Or is there further probation? Is there a prospect of Restoration? Or is it to be anticipated that Annihilation will by-and-bye end everything for those who have done evil? All these are historic questions—and not one of them is answered! This Statement avoids condemnation of the most common and popular unbiblical theories. Anyone can believe anything provided that he believes that in the future there is going to be some sort of a punishment of evil.

The Primitive Methodist Statement is not much better in this respect. Article K of the Statement reads:—

"The General Judgment, and Eternal Rewards and Punishments."

What does this mean? A distinction has been drawn between *being eternally lost* and *suffering eternal loss*. Apparently it is with such a distinction in view that the phrase is used: "Eternal rewards and punishments." Some hold that those unsaved here will never fully regain what their impenitence and hardness of heart have led them to reject while on earth. They may yet be saved; but some measure of the blessedness God designed for them will have been lost for ever. This will be "an eternal punishment." Such an interpretation of the Primitive Methodist Statement seems to me to be perfectly legitimate. It is indefinite, and, in view of the unavoidable question—"Is the banishment of the wicked from the presence of God eternal?"—it seems to me it can only be termed, like the United Methodist Statement, evasive. That there is no intention of being Biblical and definite upon this matter seems clear from the fact that all the three proposed new forms of Statement omit "eternal rewards and punishments" and take refuge in the undefined phrase, "into a resurrection of condemnation" or "into a judgment of condemnation." The Connexional Committee's proposal adds the words "and punishment"—"the resurrection of condemnation and punishment." But this is of course understood everywhere, and does not in any way answer the strictures which it seems perfectly fair and imperative to offer.

In the Primitive Methodist Church, when the question is asked, does he believe and preach our Doctrines? the reference is really to the Statement which I have been criticising. If the doctrines of the Statement are believed and preached, the answer can be "Yes." The Statement is supposed to be a digest of the main teachings of Wesley's 44 Sermons and Notes; but those who compare the original with the digest will be startled to note the differences—not consisting so much in what is added, as in *what is left out!* The door is open in both the Statement of the Primitive and of the United Methodist Church for all manner of errors which are clearly and determinedly barred out by Wesley in the Sermons and the Notes—our own Wesleyan Standards of Doctrine.

Yet I am informed by an eminent member of the Joint Committee on Methodist Union that the question of doctrine has not even emerged at all in their deliberations upon Reunion! The thing God's Church exists for—viz., its Message and its Witness—seems to be the one thing nobody troubles about in these strange apostate days.

Notes.

What is Meant by "No Controversy"?

The last Conference voted a resolution that there should be "no controversy" on matters of doctrine during the year. Most Modernists understand this to mean that they are at liberty to teach what they like and no one else is at liberty to say a word about it. A very high authority has expressed the opinion that the resolution means that while all sorts of views may be expressed no one shall be personally criticised for expressing them! However eminent the gentleman who expresses this view, nothing, it seems to us, could be more futile than the course he proposes. "Criticise views," he says in effect, "but do not attempt to bring home responsibility for these views to any individual." Why not? No public man can legitimately object to public comment on his utterances, or can honourably ask to avoid responsibility for them. "Views" are not self-existent. They do not float in the irresponsible ether. They are existent only in the thought, speech, and writing of responsible men. Why let off the men?

Meantime, we open the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union Circular, and find almost in the first sentence a volume recommended to Sunday School teachers which is based from beginning to end upon the "higher critical" error. It is by an author whom the Editors of this *Journal* charged at the last Conference but one on account of this volume, they only withdrawing their charges on condition that a committee was appointed to look into the whole question of our doctrinal pledges and unity. Again, we take the *Methodist Recorder*, and find it is still advertising, on behalf of the Book Room, various Fernley Lectures, etc., which are full of

poisonous error. Is this advertisement in keeping with the Conference resolution? Surely the very beginning of a "no controversy" procedure should be to withdraw from circulation the impugned volumes which have prominently figured in the controversy, and for all who inwardly hold views contrary to Methodist doctrine to refrain from expressing those views.

Since these elementary first steps are not taken, we regard the Modernists and their abettors as having set aside the recommendation of Conference, and as having made entirely void the "no controversy" plan.

Dangerous Movements in the Churches.

We commented last month upon the long series of Conferences between certain Wesleyan ministers and certain Episcopalians—among whom the Ritualistic and Romanising Bishop of London is the leader, and Mr. Athelstan Riley, an advocate of mariolatry, very prominent—as one which needed watching, especially in view of the increasing indications of a Romanising movement in our own and the other Free Churches. In this connection it is worthy of emphatic note that the proposed alterations in the Prayer Book Form for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, are aimed at a harmony between the Form of the Protestant Reformed Religion by Law Established and the Form of the Church of Rome. Nine Bishops have issued a protest; but these protests, verbal and ineffective, have been continual for many years gone by—and the steady Romanising process goes on and on continuously.

Meantime, Methodism, which ought to be the world-wide counteractive to Rome and all her works, continues in all lands to devitalise herself and sell her birth-right. A subscriber has sent to us a marked passage from the February issue of *Watchword and Truth*. After referring to the decline of British Methodism, and attributing it, very inadequately we are sure, to love of money, our contemporary goes on:—

"In America we have watched with great anxiety a still deeper source of decline. In spite of protests made by Conferences and some of the most distinguished ministers of the denomination, the Bishops have introduced a new set of Books to be studied by the students for the ministry and every one of them contradicts the fundamentals of Evangelical truth and also the plain teachings of the founders of Methodism. They magnify man and minimize God, they deny the necessity of the new birth and throw doubt upon the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Indeed, these Books would be well suited for Unitarian preachers, but are poison to the Methodists. Will the Methodists divide?"

A Nonconformist Romaniser.

Meantime Dr. Orchard has been going yet further in the direction of Rome. The United Methodists of Brighton asked him down to preach and address a tea-table conference on Re-Union. He expressed the view that Nonconformists, and indeed the Churches in general, are not yet sufficiently alike in belief to make union feasible, but he urged all not to hold too tenaciously to beliefs which others do not share, and declared himself ready for a union with Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism and the Papacy! We are moving fast down the slopes of ruin when Methodists invite Dr. Orchard to visit them and argue on these lines without protest or hindrance from them.

The Free Catholic Movement.

It is necessary to be very much on our guard concerning Dr. Orchard and all associated with him in his "Free Catholic Movement." That our readers may understand the meaning of the movement, we give one or two quotations. In a sermon on the "Priestly Sacrifice," Dr. Orchard writes:—

"It is alleged that I have made priestly claims and introduced Roman ceremonial. The charge is perfectly true."

Again, the *Church Times* of January 18, 1918, reports him as follows:—

"We have found ourselves drawn to the Altar, the Mass, and the Reserved Sacrament. This has held our heart, and is our first attraction to Catholicism. We crave for something beside a pulpit and a prophet."

"We must stay inside the Free Churches and Catholicise them. We do not despair of Nonconformity, for did not the Tractarian Movement transform and revive the Church of England?"

A Romanist on Dr. Orchard.

Some years ago Mr. W. B. Luke, J.P., was a prominent member of the Bible Christian Church, now merged in the United Methodist Church. He became a Romanist, and in the *Catholic Gazette* of November, 1918, writes an estimate of the "Free Catholic Movement" and of Dr. Orchard's proceedings at King's Weigh House Church. He declares Dr. Orchard to have an influential following among the "intellectuals" of Nonconformity. He describes the close approach to Roman practice in the services at the Church, and then says:—

"These things are done in a Chapel which from 1662 until the day before yesterday embodied the spirit of the most rigid and uncompromising Puritanism! It is to be presumed that the deacons are acquiescent. Certainly all their predecessors without exception, and every minister down to the eminent Thomas Binney, would have been amazed and horrified at the idea of such proceedings. They would not have understood why the pastor should compile a Service Book 'based mainly on the primitive Greek Liturgies, the great Latin Sacramentaries, and the Book of Common Prayer,' instead of confining himself to extempore utterances, nor why he should praise his production for being 'in line with Catholic tradition,' when it was their chief endeavour—indeed their *raison d'être*—to combat and discredit that tainted source of Papistical dogma and practice. The Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople, now (but not for long, perhaps!) a Mohammedan mosque, has not been more violently perverted from the purpose of its original founders than is the King's Weigh House Chapel when it is made the headquarters of such a propaganda."

Meantime Rome's Arrogance Continues.

But while Nonconformists are thus demeaning themselves, Rome maintains her arrogant anti-social attitude. Why do not Romanisers in Episcopal and non-Episcopal circles deal with her arrogant claims, and rebut them, unless indeed they agree with them and are ready to submit? A correspondent very aptly calls our attention to the fact that while these humble approaches are being made by Protestants, Rome only recently promulgated her "Ne Temere" decree, according to which, in an official announcement quoted by the *Sydney Watchman* of August last:—

"Catholics getting married otherwise than in the Catholic Church are excommunicated. Since the issue of the *Ne Temere* decree a few years ago, such marriage is invalid and the children are illegitimate in the eyes of God and His Church."

When we add to all Rome's arrogance the terrible fact that all through our life and death struggle with German hate and tyranny Roman influence has commonly been used against us, then the eagerness for an approach to Rome becomes doubly incomprehensible.

What Shall a Faithful Christian do To-day?

Let us answer this question in a few words. It is *the* question of questions for each one of us.

1. Steep his mind and heart in the words and teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

2. Be much in the high places of communion with God, and on the *Battlefields* of prayer.

3. Separate himself absolutely from the ministry of any man who believes the Bible contains errors, or that our Divine Lord made mistakes.

4. Attend on the ministry of any true minister of the Divine Word, and especially of any minister who is a member of the Wesley Bible Union.

5. Set himself diligently to bring under that ministry all whom his influence can touch.

6. Aim definitely at the conversion of sinners to Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. Claim and Witness to Full Salvation.

8. Arrange local meetings of the Wesley Bible Union, and do everything possible to save the largest possible "remnant" from the wreckage of Wesleyan Methodism.

False Teachers are Punishments.

An earnest member of the Bible Union (Mr. R. R. Cousins) sends us the following most timely and apposite quotation from Martin Luther—so very true and timely that we gladly print it here:—

"False teachers are punishments for evil times, and are God's greatest tokens of anger and displeasure, as Hosea says:—'The days of visitation are come: Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity and the great hatred.' Even so, on the contrary, good and godly teachers are glorious witnesses. They are God's favours and mercies; hence St. Paul nameth Apostles, Evangelists, prophets, and teachers as gifts and presents from our Saviour Christ (sitting at the right hand of the Father); and the Prophet Micah compareth the teacher of the gospel to a fruitful rain."

How deeply Methodism and England must have sinned! Higher Critics, Christian Scientists, Theosophists, Spiritualists, Mystics, Russelites—is there any end to the list of "new religions" and perversions of the old? And all this is in addition to the great multitude who profess orthodox sentiments but absent themselves from God's House, do nothing to maintain the Christian Witness, and really by endless omission depart from the Faith almost as certainly as do the "higher critics." All this portends dark times ahead for England, unless she repent! As Mr. Cousins says, in a further quotation from Richard Watson:—

"Sin is, in Scripture, represented as an enemy that seeks our ruin and destruction and takes all occasions to effect it."

To our Helpers.

A Member of the Committee, noting that we need for the work of this year (Oct., 1918, to Sept., 1919) a further £100 to carry through the ordinary work, and an additional £100 for the special work hinted at in our November issue, now offers to give £10 if the first £100 is subscribed by the end of February, and a further £15 if the second £100 is completed by the end of March.

Will you help to secure these promises?

Mr. Asquith and State Purchase of the Liquor Traffic.

In the *Daily News* of November 16th we rejoice to see that Mr. Asquith has declared definitely and strongly against State Purchase of the Liquor Traffic. In replying to a deputation from the United Kingdom Alliance, the National Temperance Federation, and the British Women's Temperance Association, Mr. Asquith said :—

Referring to the question of local veto and State Purchase, in his view there were two, and only two, ways of dealing with the liquor problem. The first was that embodied in the Licensing Bill of 1908 and in the Temperance (Scotland) Act, 1913, namely, to empower the people to deal with this traffic according to their views and interests. He still adhered to this position, and was more convinced than ever that if the Licensing Bill of 1908 had become law the benefits positive and negative that would have accrued to the nation during the past ten years would have been immeasurable, and far greater than those resulting from any measure passed during that period.

The alternative was State Purchase. As an old Chancellor of the Exchequer, and one who had a long experience of financial matters, he had examined the subject from every point of view. It was true that some of the proposals had plausible attractions, but in his view the whole scheme was financially unsound. That, however, was only one, and not the principal, consideration. There were businesses, some of which had been placed under Government control during the war, which might rightly, and probably would, be acquired and carried on by the State. But this business was not a business of that character; it was a business the owning and carrying on of which as a business the State should not touch with its finger tips.

On every ground—social, economic, moral, and intellectual—he was opposed to State Purchase, whether by the State as a whole or by smaller communities, and those who opposed such a proposal might rely on his uncompromising support.

The Ethics of State Purchase.

Some of our readers may wonder, seeing that we are the only organ in Wesleyan Methodism that stands definitely for the defence of the doctrines of our Standards, why we so often occupy our slender space with the question of Temperance Reform. We answer at once that it is because we hold that this subject is a prominent and integral part of our doctrinal system. The support which so many in our Churches are disposed to give to the State Purchase of the Liquor Traffic is part and parcel of the spirit of compromise which is really the mainspring of the Modernist apostasy. That apostasy is an endeavour to popularize the Church by compromises with the Spirit of the Age, what Carlyle called the *Time-Spirit*, concerning which he said :—

Often have I wondered how, in thy hard life-battle (Professor Teufelsdröckh is speaking of his father whom he never knew), thou wert shot at, and slung at, wounded, hand-fettered, ham-strung, browbeaten, and bedevilled by the Time-Spirit in thyself and others, till the good soul first given thee was seared into grim rage; and thou hadst nothing for it but to leave in me an indignant appeal to the Future, and living Protest against the Devil, as that same Spirit not of the Time only but of Time itself is well named.

Like the C.D.A., State Purchase of the Liquor Traffic would convert the State into a purveyor of vice for its own subjects. The principle involved in this mischievous proposal is in effect this: Seeing we cannot exorcize Beelzebub, let us go into partnership with him, and seek to control Satan by associating ourselves with his traffic.

John Wesley and the Liquor Traffic.

Although we have previously printed the following extract in our columns we feel that in view of the settlement in relation to Temperance legislation in the new Parliament we cannot do better than put again before our readers the declaration of our Standards of Doctrine in relation to the Liquor Traffic. The passage is taken from the famous sermon on "*The Use of Money*":

Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour in his body. Therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire, commonly called drams, or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine; they may be of use in some bodily disorders; although there would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner.* Therefore, such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clear. But who are they? Do you know ten such distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them. The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell! Blood, blood is there! The foundation, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou "art clothed in scarlet and fine linen and farest sumptuously every day," canst thou hope to deliver down thy fields of blood to the third generation? Not so: for there is a God in heaven. Therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, "thy memorial shall perish with thee."

Use Your Influence for Christ in Politics.

We would earnestly appeal to all who read this *Journal* to bear in mind that their vote and political influence are talents for which they will have to give an account to God in the great day, and that they will be condemned not only for their misuse but for their neglect. We would remind them that social conversation is a mighty instrument in determining the political issues. We would implore them to talk against the filthy regulations which seek to provide safe prostitution for vile men, and this State defiance of the laws of God by the organizing of whoremongering; and also to seek to influence their representatives in Parliament to resist measures that would make provision by State Purchase for the State itself to engage in the Liquor Traffic.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of several copies of the February 1918 *Journal*.

The Wesley Bible Union Cause needs unashamed public advocacy, bold personal witness, determined disciplinary action, and generous financial support.

"Criticism."—II.

MR. J. ALDRIDGE.

What do we mean by the "Higher-Criticism" of the Old Testament? It is used to shelter opinions about the Bible which are at variance with those of traditional "orthodoxy." Whoever rejects the popular views about the authority and credibility of Scripture considers he has a right to appeal to the "higher-criticism" in support of his assertions. It also means a critical inquiry into the nature, origin,

* Let our readers particularly note the words which we have here italicized and underlined.

and date of the documents with which we are dealing, as well as into the historical value and credibility of the statements which they contain.

In this investigation, into the nature and origin of the documents with which it deals, the "higher-criticism" is largely dependent on the aid of the "lower-criticism." By the "lower-criticism" is meant what we call "textual-criticism," a method of criticism which is wholly philological and palæographical, searching into the character and trustworthiness of the text and the exact meaning of its language. Unfortunately the arrogance of tone adopted, at times, by the "higher-criticism" has been productive of nothing but mischief and betrayed the critic into a dogmatism as unwarranted as it is unscientific. Baseless assumptions have been placed on a level with ascertained facts, hasty conclusions have been put forward as principles of science, and we have been called upon to accept the fancies of the individual critic as the revelation of a new gospel. If the archæologist ventured to suggest that the facts he had discovered did *not* support the views of the critic, he was told that he was no philologist; perhaps not, but he knows that questions of archæology *cannot* be decided by philology. His evidence is not of the right kind. Philologists considered that they could construct the primitive life of the Aryan or other Indo-European nations by means of the mere study of language. But it was afterwards found out that the assumptions based thereon were in complete contrast to the actual facts revealed by archæologists as their discoveries developed. After this no scientific Philologist would think of taking up such a position again. But the lesson has yet to be learned by Semitic scholars in their criticism of the Bible and their attempt to reconstruct the early history of the Semitic nations.

It seems somewhat strange that the Critics should imagine that they have all the eminent scholars on their side, doubtless they have many, but there are a large number of distinguished scholars who have refused to endorse their destructive criticisms of God's Word. Neither is it necessary to have the linguistic genius of Mezzofanti for the study of Palæography, as we shall see as we proceed.

"GENESIS."

We are told that the first eleven chapters are neither history nor science, but myth, legend, and allegory, and that

Creation and Modern Science are incompatible. But we must remember that this is the language of a Theologian. We prefer to listen to one whose name is revered wherever Science is known. "The record in the Bible," says Dana, "is profoundly philosophical in the scheme of creation which it presents. It is both true and Divine. It is a declaration of authorship, both of creation and the Bible, on the first page of the sacred Volume."

"CHAPTER X."

We think the Critic, who ventured to speak of the first eleven chapters as he did, must have forgotten this ethnological table.

Professor Kautzsch, a critic of note, says of that old table :—"The so-called Table of Nations remains, according to all results of monumental exploration, an ethnographic original document of the first rank which nothing can replace." But "the object of this Table," says Dr. Driver, "is partly to show how the Hebrews supposed the principal nations known to them to be related to each other, partly to assign Israel, in particular, its place among them." If that is so, excessive pains must have been taken to conceal the writer's purpose. For there is no mention whatever of Israel, nor even the remotest apparent reference to it.

In this chapter we have two verses (8-10) which give certain statements about the origin of Babylonian civilization.

First.—That Babylonia is the oldest of civilizations.

Second.—That Assyrian civilization was derived from Babylonia.

Third.—Strangest of all, that the founders of Babylonian civilization were *not* Semites, but Hamites, descendants of Cush.

Each of these statements was in contradiction to old classical notices and to what was currently believed till recently about these ancient people. Now, when we get to the 22nd verse, we find it stated that Elam was the first-born of Shem. Now here was a difficulty, because the Elam of history was well-known to be Aryan. There seemed to be no satisfactory explanation to this seeming discrepancy. A French expedition was sent to excavate at Susa, the capital of Elam, and there, getting down far enough, they made a most astonishing discovery. Away down below the historical Aryan Elam they found the remains of an older civilization, bricks inscribed with Babylonian characters, and the remains

of an old Semitic civilization, which made it clear that, after all, Elam was a son of Shem. Dr. Driver says there is no doubt it has been discovered that there was a Semitic civilization at bottom ; but it cannot be supposed that this writer knew anything about it. The strange thing, however, is that the writer *did* know about it, while modern scholars *did not*.

"CHAPTER XIV."

In 1869 the great Semitic scholar, Professor Nöldeke, published a treatise on the "Unhistorical Character of the 14th Chapter of Genesis." He declared that "criticism" had for ever disproved its claim to be historical. The political situation presupposed by it was incredible and impossible ; at so distant a date Babylonian armies could not have marched to Canaan, much less could Canaan have been a subject province of Babylonia. The whole story was a fiction. The names of the princes commemorated in it were etymological inventions ; eminent Semitic philologists had already explained those of Chedor-laomer and his allies from Sanskrit, and those of the Canaanitish princes were derived from the events to which they were supposed to have borne a part. In 1903 "criticism" is discreetly silent about the conclusions which it then announced with so much assurance. But the stones have been crying out, and modern research has absolutely and incontestably verified the Biblical statement. A tablet, deciphered by Dr. Pinches, narrates events of this very time, even if it does not refer to the actual facts of Genesis xiv., and it gives the names in company of Eri Aku or Arioch, Tudula or Tidal, and Kudurlahgumal or Chedor-laomer. Very singular and corroborative witness also concerning the same chapter has been discovered in what are known as the Tell-el-Amarna tablets. Dr. Driver, in his "Authority and Archæology," asserts that the historical character of the four kings has never been seriously questioned. But Dillmann states in his Genesis that the history of Genesis xiv was rejected by Kuenen, Vatke, Wellhausen, von Bohlen, Hitzig, Nöldeke, Stade, and E. Meyer.

A history which had seemed lost for ever has been discovered for us, and we can now handle and read the very letters which passed between the contemporaries of Abraham as we do about the Assyria of the age of Isaiah or about the Greece of the age of Perikles. We have seen, then, the attack which was directed against the volume of Inspiration

on account of the statement therein concerning Chedor-laomer, has, repulsed and defeated, revived to fasten itself upon Amraphel, King of Shinar. The confederation of Genesis xiv, denied, despised, rejected, is now solid fact. The fabled Amraphel is now the historic Hammurabi. "Every advance in archæological knowledge," says Professor Sayce, "has been in favour of tradition and against the subjective conclusions of the 'higher-criticism.'" In no single case have the so-called "critical" theories been confirmed; on the contrary, wherever they could be tested by archæological discovery they have been proved to be groundless. Let us take courage, for many eminent scholars have recanted, and the Tübingen school of criticism is as dead as Queen Anne.

Biblical truth is one of the files the "Critics" are wearing away their teeth on, and when they see the chips they think they are making progress. They misrepresent, distort, and fight against it, and imagine they have defeated it, but when the teeth are gone the file remains; and when the "Critics" have passed away the truth remains, undisturbed and unaltered.

The Book of Genesis and Modern Science.

ANTEDILUVIAN CIVILISATION AND GROWING CORRUPTION.

BY REV. D. GATH WHITLEY.

We are now closing our survey of the Antediluvian Era in the light of Modern Science, and there remain but a few points to be briefly considered.

First of all—We read in the Book of Genesis that there were *ten* Patriarchs from Seth to Noah in Antediluvian times, that is from the Creation to the Flood. This is strongly supported by the science of Comparative Religion. To whatever epoch ancient nations trace back their origins we nearly always find in their beginning *ten* great ancestors. This is witnessed to by the traditions of the ancient Iranians, the Hindoos, the Germans, the Scandinavians, the Chinese, and the Arabs. Thus, the unity of ancient traditions points to *ten* great leading names in the early ages of the existence of

ancient nations. Professor Hommel has proved that the ten earliest Patriarchs of the Babylonian historian, Berosus, are the same as those in the Sethite line in Genesis. Here we have another proof of the manner in which modern science supports the Bible.

The gradual progress of men in the Antediluvian Era in Civilisation is carefully described in the Bible. According to the discoveries in the sciences of Geology and Prehistoric Archæology this progression took place in several stages. There was first a Stone Age, in which man's tools and weapons were exclusively of stone. Then followed an Age of Bronze—although some scientists consider that it was preceded by an Age of Copper. Last of all came the Iron Age, in which Man reached the highest stage of civilisation. If we study carefully the earliest chapters of the Book of Genesis, we find that the Bible clearly shows the gradual development of the industrial arts. We read in the end of the 4th chapter of Genesis of the discovery of metals, and of the invention of an elaborate system of music; the Stone Age therefore must have lasted a long time according to the Bible. According to Science men gradually progressed, from the Stone Age to the Iron Age; so on this point also the Bible is in perfect harmony with Science.

The ancient Babylonians also had traditions of the gradual growth of civilisation before the Deluge. Indirect support of this is furnished by the account of the building of Noah's Ark. Noah had under him many workmen who put windows, doors, roofs, and floors into the Ark. This proves that before the Flood not only were sea-going vessels in existence which traded to different countries, but that land buildings and domestic architecture had been long in existence. The Babylonian story of the Deluge also says that the city of Surripak had been in existence before the Flood, and other cities must have existed at the same time.

Another characteristic of the *later* part of the Antediluvian Era was the *growing corruption* of the time. Civilisation increased, but manners and morals became more and more corrupt. This is shown in Genesis by the union of the pious Sethites ("The sons of God") with the corrupt and violent Cainites ("The daughters of Men"). See Genesis VI., 1-6. The result of this was violence, corruption, and every kind of wickedness, and it was this outburst of de-

pravity which caused God to send a Flood upon the Earth destroy to Mankind as a punishment for their sin.

Now, the science of Comparative Religion—which collects and arranges the religious customs and traditions of ancient nations—has strikingly confirmed the statements of Holy Scripture, for there are ancient traditions which have been for a long time preserved by the leading nations of antiquity, which relate that men, after their early state of innocence, became gradually more and more corrupt. The ancient Egyptians (whose civilisation was perhaps the oldest in the world) held that the earliest days of the Human Race were the holiest and happiest of all. In India and in ancient Greece the gradual degeneracy of mankind from the beginning of Human history was most strongly held. In the Zoroastrian religion (which was the religion of the ancient Persians) we find—like the Greeks—that four ages of Humanity were believed in. The oldest and happiest was the Golden Age, in which men were holy. Then came in succession the ages of silver, brass, and iron, in which men became gradually worse and worse. Professor Lenormant—one of the most talented of French scientists—says of the belief of Primitive Innocence and of gradual corruption among the leading nations of antiquity:—"The idea of the Edenic happiness of the first human beings constitutes one of the universal traditions This belief in an age of happiness and innocence in the infancy of mankind may be found among all peoples of the Aryan or Japhetic race. It was among the beliefs held by them anterior to their dispersion, and it has been long since remarked by all scholars, that this is one of the points where their traditions find themselves most evidently on common ground with the Semitic stories which we find in Genesis." (1) *The Beginning of History*, p. 67.

We have now completed our survey of the Antediluvian Period as it is recorded in the Book of Genesis, and what has Science to say concerning this examination?

We have found that the narrative of the Creation in Genesis is strikingly confirmed by Geology, and that no fewer than three sciences (Psychology, Archæology, and Comparative Religion) testify to the truth of the story of Eden, and of the Fall of Man. We have shown also that the narratives of Cain and Abel; of the early inventions of the arts and sciences; of the giants; of the longevity of the Patriarchs;

of the ten primeval heads of Humanity ; and of the steadily growing corruption of Man ; are all supported by the testimony of the science of Primitive Tradition. We have even brought forward the testimony of Physical Geography to show that many regions of the Earth in the present day bear witness, by their altered condition, to the truth of the Primeval Curse pronounced by God on the Earth because of Man's sin at the Fall. We ask all readers to ponder these things carefully, and to consider how great is the quantity of evidence which Almighty God is pleased to allow us to discover from Science to testify to the Truth of His Written Word.

A difficulty may arise in some minds as to the *varying character* of the heathen traditions which support the Bible narratives, and it may be asked—"Why are these traditions so strange, and why do they show such very fantastic details, while in the main they support Holy Scripture"? The answer is very simple. When God gave His Revelation to Man He made choice of a chosen race, a chosen family, and a chosen nation, who should receive that Revelation, and hand it on until in the Fullness of Time the Son of God should become Incarnate in the World. Thus, before the Flood, God chose the family of Seth to be the chosen people to preserve His Revelation. After the Flood the family of Shem was the favoured people of Revelation. Then God chose out of Shem's Family Abraham and his descendants, so that through the Jews His Revelation was preserved. Now amongst the Chosen Race, and amidst the Chosen People, God's Holy Spirit preserved the Sacred Narratives from any corruption and kept them in perfect truth. And so when the Sacred Records began to be written by Moses, and were continued in writing by his successors, the Holy Spirit guided the Sacred Writings and preserved them in perfect truth. Among the heathen it was not so. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and so God let them alone. They had no *special* Revelation, and so in their vain imaginations they clouded over the narratives and recollections of God's early dealings with Mankind with all kinds of Polytheistic absurdities. God's light still shone in their consciences, but in their darkened imaginations and foolish pride they sank into idolatries. In most heathen religions we find beneath the surface many traces and remembrances of God's dealings with men in early days which confirm the truth of

the Bible, but as the Holy Spirit did not *specially* rule and guide these heathens in retaining these recollections they are often dim and confused and polytheistic.

Correspondence Column.

I should like to thank those—no small number—who have written during the past two or three months thanking the Editors for the *Journal*, and all the Active Members of the Wesley Bible Union for the fight they are making for the truth. All these letters have been highly appreciated.

An excellent course was taken by a member who has sent his subscription very late, saying :—

“I enclose double the amount as a self-imposed penalty for my default.”

O that all the rest would do the same !

Mr. Joseph Armstrong, a member of the Wesley Bible Union Committee, seeing in the Irish paper, *The Christian Advocate*, a letter urging that Irish Candidates, accepted for the Wesleyan Ministry, should be sent to English Wesleyan Colleges, wrote to the Editor pointing out that English Wesleyan Colleges are staffed almost exclusively by “higher critics.” The Editor refused to publish this letter, and Mr. Armstrong answered the reasons alleged by the Editor for his refusal. It is so cogent and useful in a time like this that I give it in full :—

I am sincerely obliged for your friendly letter which I much appreciate, but frankly I cannot agree with your conclusions. To take them in order. (1) You say my letter “is personal and may be actionable.” Could it serve any purpose if indefinite? Would it not be beating the air not to give names and particulars? and who would pay any attention to it? Definiteness is, I submit, indispensable. If it is personal it is certainly without pique. I have mentioned others beside Mr. Jackson, and there are two reasons why I have chiefly referred to him; one is, he has published in book form his assertions that the Bible is an unreliable book: there are plenty of other Wesleyan ministers equally prominent in propagating the same heterodoxy, but what they have published is more fragmentary in the shape of lectures and articles sent to the press, which are not so convenient to deal with. The other and chief reason is that the Conference has set the seal of its approval on his scepticism by appointing him Tutor in Pastoral Theology, and that is plainly stated in my letter. I am confident that it could not be actionable, for I have quoted most carefully with his book open before me.

(2) You say “it advertises the man gratuitously.” I submit that the quotations from his own book would condemn him in the eyes of every true Christian.

(3) You say :—“It is a matter with which we in this country have

nothing directly to do." Does not the close connection make it a vital matter? The English President is your President, you can transact no business without him, you are part of the same body; but especially if Mr. Duke's recommendation is acted on in all probability young men for the Irish ministry will be trained by Mr. Jackson, or if not by him by some one holding similar views. Could that be a matter of no concern to you?

You say:—"A newspaper is not a good place to wash our dirty linen"; but dirty linen should be washed somewhere, and somehow; if there is a better place or way of doing it, I shall be delighted, *in case it is done*, but do not let it remain filthy.

I see you struck out Dr. Moulton's name;* I too would much rather not mention it if it was not important to do so, but the laudation of his name gives sanction to his erroneous teaching; and the Bible does not fail to mention the injurious evil things, as well as the good in the lives of the departed—the Kings of Israel for instance and others; and our Saviour warned against false prophets in sheep's clothing, and Paul mentions two by name, while he and other of the Apostles denounce false teachers in scathing terms.

It has been said that it is as necessary to expose error as to expound the truth. And if true religion is to be defended and maintained, it must be done openly, unsparingly, faithfully, and fearlessly. Higher Criticism, or unbelief of God's word has been secretly propagated and nurtured in the Colleges, and has taken root there, and been stealthily communicated to the officials—Local Preachers, and Stewards, etc., until the time seemed ripe for launching it broadcast, but still camouflaged as much as possible, so that it often takes alertness and discrimination to unmask it.

In this way it is sought to bring the rank and file into line, for Mr. Jackson has said:—"In practically all our Colleges, and in the great majority of at least the younger generation of our preachers, the teaching and beliefs concerning the Bible are very different from those which still prevail amongst the general body of our Church members.."

The results of that scepticism in the ministerial ranks, and also to a very considerable extent in official Methodism are everywhere manifest. In public worship "sermons have lost their old-time grip"; spiritual vitality has either vanished or is at the lowest ebb; the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is neither expected nor experienced as of old; churches are half empty or more, and the command to "go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that My House may be filled," is no longer obeyed; aggressive evangelism, the power to influence the masses, is a thing of the past, and the great bulk of the people of this country never enter a place of worship. Membership deteriorates in quality, and notwithstanding a much wider door of admittance, decreases steadily, and the Methodist press teems with heterodoxy. As a sample, R. H. Brown, writing in the *Methodist Record*, 8th August, 1918, under a very prominent heading says:—"The reformers for instance freed themselves from the shackles of an infallible Church to bind themselves in bondage to an infallible Book." As they break away from the alleged bondage they "are carried about with every wind of doctrine," such as, that death on the battle field ensures Heaven, (I heard this stated by a Wesleyan minister on a public platform), and the use of prayers for the dead. I heard a Wesleyan minister say from the pulpit:—"In a certain communication trench in France there was a crucifix, and as the men passed they took off their hats and prayed, and when we were having a prayer meeting we got a crucifix." Loosed from the anchor of God's word they wander according to the dictates of imagination and unbelief.

These things cannot be unknown to the Irish Ministry, who are represented at every English Conference, and I presume read much of English Methodist

* This means Dr. J. Hope Moulton, not Dr. W. F. Moulton.

literature ; why, then, is there no protest from a single Minister ? Silence gives consent, and allows this pernicious, God-dishonouring, soul-destroying scepticism to progress without let or hindrance. Silence in such circumstances is criminal. It is not "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." God's word is being defamed, the very foundations of true religion are being swept away to the extent that such sceptical teaching prevails, and not a word of protest is heard from the whole Irish Ministry.

I first thought of writing a short letter without names as you suggested, but on consideration concluded that it would be absolutely futile. Who would pay any attention to assertions minus proof ? which cannot be given effectively without names ; nothing could be accomplished other than by open, plain, pointed statements, giving both names and particulars. I felt impelled to write that letter, and I now feel the responsibility is off my shoulders.

MR. CORNWALL, of New Brighton, writes :—Allow me to congratulate you on the splendid service which the Wesley Bible Union is rendering to the cause of evangelical truth in exposing and combating the erroneous teaching in the Methodist Church concerning the Scriptures. As we believe the future well-being of our Empire is bound up with belief in the Bible, every honest attempt to inspire in the people of our land "Reverence for the Scriptures as the revelation of God's will to mankind," deserves the heartiest support of every true Christian man and woman. When Josiah ascended the throne of Israel after his country had been desolated by war, his first act of reconstruction after attending to the repair of the house of the Lord, was to discover the book of the law (the Bible), which had been lost or hidden away, and have it read to the people.

Is it not true to-day that with thousands in our land and in our churches the Bible has become a lost book ? When Queen Victoria presented a copy of the sacred book to an African chief she exclaimed : "This is the secret of Britain's greatness." Yet how many believe this to-day ? Is it not a fact that in later years the Bible has been gradually losing its hold upon our nation, and that to this cause must be attributed the decline in public worship and loss of appetite for spiritual things ? There is an impression abroad that we have outgrown the Bible—outgrown it theologically and religiously—and yet if the war has taught us one lesson, it is that so far from having outgrown the Bible we have not yet mastered its elementary principles and teaching. True, we are still babes requiring the service-milk of the word that we may grow thereby. In view of the experience of the war the cry of every true Christian must be : "Back to the Bible ! Back to the Bible !" If only in the interest of public morality it is of vital importance that the Divine authority of the Bible be maintained. "Where there is no vision the people perish," or *where the vision is blinded by false teaching the people also perish*. Neglect of the Bible, or lax views as to its teaching must inevitably produce lax morals and a weakened sense of responsibility for human conduct. Let a nation once discard the Bible as out of date and no longer binding on the hearts and consciences of men, and substitute for the revelation of God's will a man-made morality and a man-made religion, and depend upon it the decline and fall of that nation cannot long be delayed.

In the work of reconstruction it is fervently to be hoped that the Methodist Church will do all in its power to rescue the Bible from the pernicious teaching of German philosophy, and seek to restore it to the position of reverence and respect it formerly occupied when it was a power for good in our native land. But this depends mainly on the fidelity of the preacher to the cardinal principles of Methodism and the Divine call to defend the faith once delivered to the Saints.

